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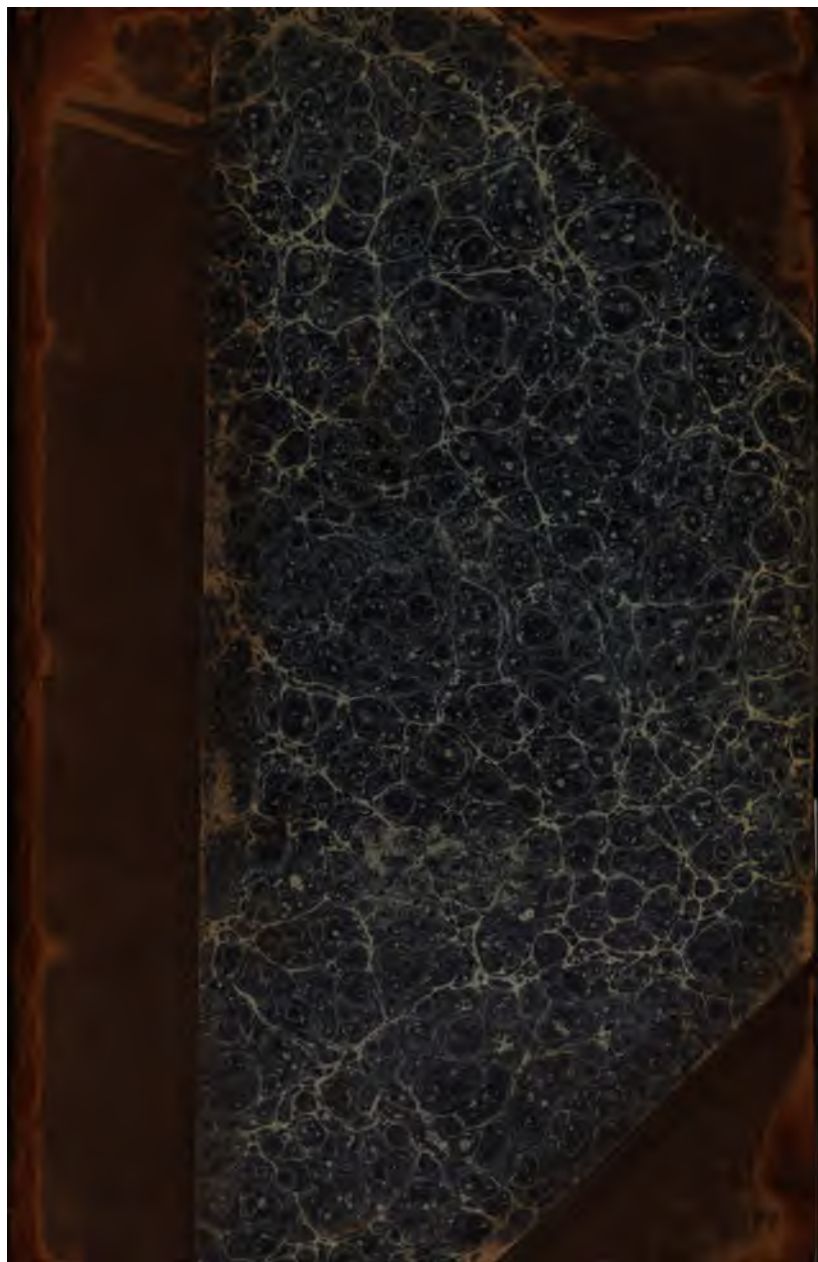
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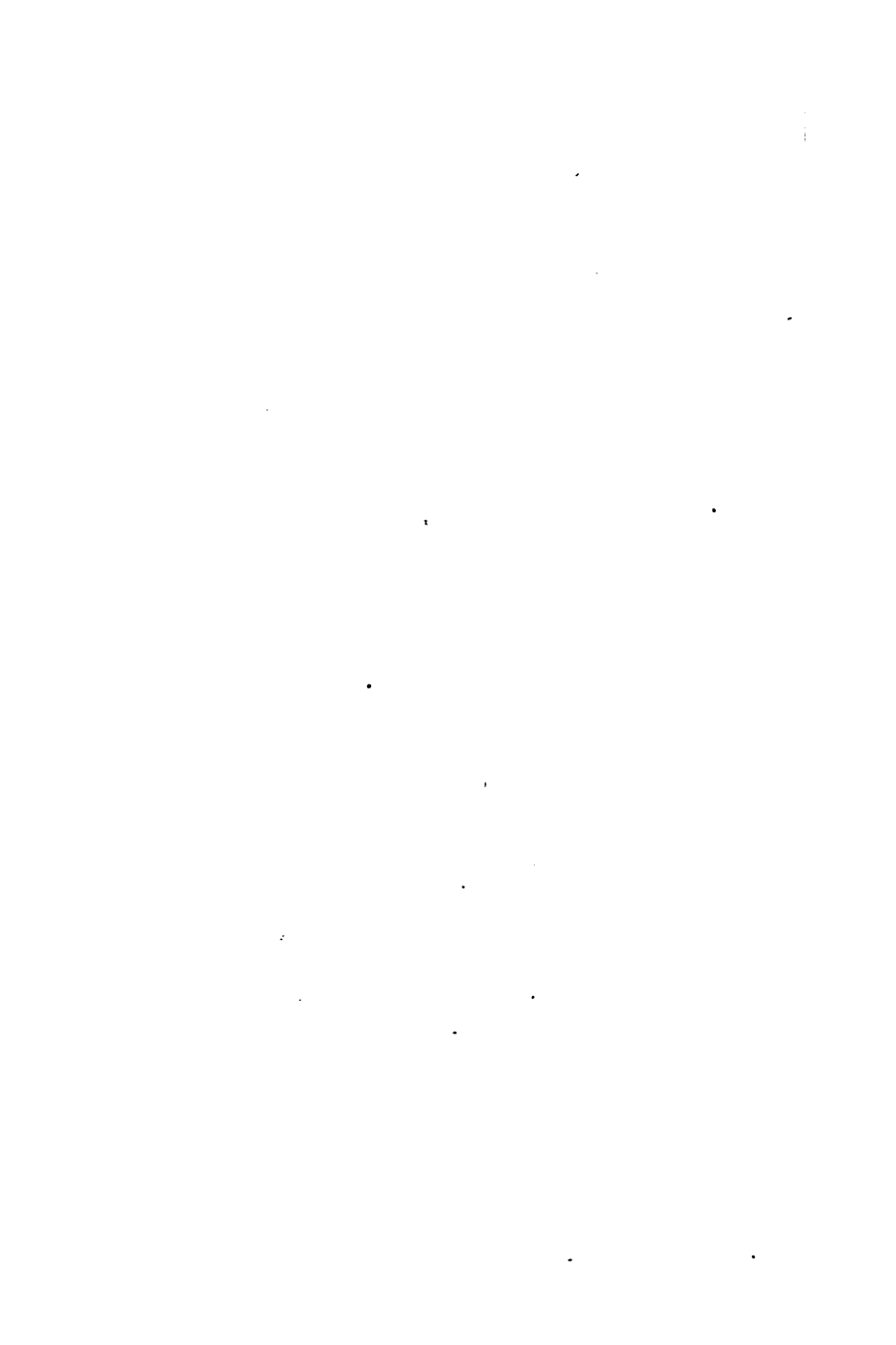


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VINDICIÆ BIBLICÆ.

A
SERIES OF NOTICES

AND

ELUCIDATIONS OF PASSAGES

IN THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,

WHICH HAVE BEEN THE

SUBJECT OF ATTACK AND MISREPRESENTATION

BY

DEISTICAL WRITERS.



LONDON:

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PREFACE.

THE following work makes no pretension to learning. The author would rather it should be regarded as shewing with how little learning a reflecting mind may overcome objections to particular passages of the Bible.

The best wish he can form for its reception is, that it may meet the exigencies of timid and anxious inquirers. Such persons will be able to appreciate an attempt to contemplate difficulties from *their* point of view, as well as the success of endeavours to explain and remove them.

It was essential to the writer's purpose, that certain plausible objections should be

opened and examined at some length; and he has done so without any reserve. From whom, indeed, should men look for sincerity and candour, if not from the Christian? and who does not see that the cause of Religion is more dishonoured by disingenuous suppressions or overstatements, than by the confession of our inability to remove the obscurities of its ancient records?—for others who take these subjects in hand may be favoured with more success; while the clear, reasonable, and direct Evidence of the Gospel can never be invalidated by partial obscurities.

VINDICIÆ BIBLICÆ.

THE attempt to collect in a single small volume elucidations of passages of the Bible which have been the subject of misrepresentation by its adversaries imposes on the author the necessity of some reasonable limitation.

Perhaps he may be permitted to avail himself of an analogy familiar to general experience.

There are many things in every MAN's conduct, concerning which the world must be ignorant for want of acquaintance with his motives and personal history.—Most reasonable then is it to think that we can be only very partially informed in respect of a history of GOD'S DEALINGS WITH HIS PEOPLE.

But further,—*indefinite* and *general* charges are easily advanced against any man, and



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and inquiring men—it is because it rests upon real evidence, and that the counsels of its adversaries have not prevailed against it.

From Mr. Carlile's repository, where the argument of Paine may be seen associated by the *discerning* vendor, with the alliance of obscenity and sedition, he obtained the "most able and complete works on particular passages of the Bible."—He has now gone through several hundred pages, with more or less attention, noting such as seemed most relied on;—and certainly with no wish to omit objections of any considerable force coming within the objects of this work.*

After all the assaults Christianity has sustained, it is remarkable that its leading evidence is still resident in a few almost undis-

* The reader will not expect a repetition of the substance of Bp. Watson's apology—much of which is indeed *beside the object in view*.—Neither is it intended to expose the instances, in which the opponents of the BIBLE have betrayed the indolence and want of attention with which they have presumed to judge it. *Homine imperito nihil injustius. TER.*

Still less can it be necessary to notice the tirades of assertion and bitter calumny, that cover so many pages, destitute of seriousness and argument.

puted propositions—the appeal being to the candour and humility of the inquirer. The little treatise to which the present forms a sequel, however humble its merits, affords the proof of this :

Let it be premised also, as a general reflection, that—

1. Objections to particular passages of the Bible, apply very partially to the question of the truth of our religion.

With respect to objections drawn from the Old Testament, Paley has well observed, that,

To make Christianity answerable with its life for the circumstantial truth or genuineness of each separate passage in the Old Testament, is to bring, not perhaps great—but *unnecessary* difficulties into the whole system.

The remark may be liable to some misconstruction, but it contains in it a truth, and may preserve from some errors.—The contrary opinion proceeds, as Paley justly observes, on a supposition which has *not* been made out by argument, namely—that the attestation which the author, and first preachers of Christianity gave to the divine mission of Moses and the

prophets, extends to every point and portion of the Jewish history ;—and so extends, as to make Christianity responsible, in its own credibility, for the circumstantial truth, and even for the critical exactness of every narrative contained in the Old Testament.

It is true, that no other ancient writings were ever accompanied with such peculiar evidences of substantial and *bona fide* genuineness, as the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments. Yet *extreme* notions on this point must be made consistent with the *fact* of very numerous but unimportant, and apparently accidental, variations in ancient copies.—We read, indeed, that our Lord promised to be with His church unto the end of the world ;—and it seems of reasonable faith to believe that His all-seeing providence would watch over the precious deposit of his word. It has accordingly been remarked, that the most imperfect manuscript of the New Testament omits no doctrine,—while the most corrupt adds none :—the greatest discrepancies leaving untouched the ground of faith, and the rule of life.

The Scriptures of the Old Testament are

professedly recorded by many hands.—To whatever extent Ezra may have been concerned in arranging and settling the canon, the writings so arranged must have been, in his time, reputed of different ages ;—and this persuasion existed, not on a point of small or passing importance,—but on one in which the Jews had nationally and individually a deep interest ; while they certainly had far better means of decision than the conjectures and suspicions of a distant and sceptical age.

In a course of lectures the reader might justly expect more precise notions on the canon of the ancient Scriptures.—As the only object here is to vindicate their character in such points as have been thought to cast suspicion on their divine original, it is enough if the reader be satisfied that ;

2. These writings were in substance, and mainly in their present form, communications to various ages, differing widely in all things affecting the social condition—the taste—and intellectual character.—Whatever be the form in which they are handed down—the subject-matter of these books had reference at first—

to a single family, alone on the earth without previous history or experience;—then to rude tribes, slowly separating, as necessity impelled, from the patriarchal authority;—to the first, and necessarily arbitrary forms of government,—and afterwards to the same forms modified by experience and by the growth of those pacific interests which allowed succeeding ages to relax their severity.

If this be true—then, doubtless, numerous *obscurities* were to be expected; and may properly be left to the Commentators who have already done so much for the elucidation of them.

But it must hence appear, further,

3. That passages in which some discover a lowering of the Divine Majesty, may have been the necessary *letting down* of the subject matter of religion to the apprehension of a simpler age.

4. That what appears to the artificial taste of a civilized age unseemly grossness in description and detail,—may have been best suited to convey to every precedent stage of human society a just moral estimate of the facts, &c, so recorded.

5. That—besides that it is to be feared we must always be partial judges of disproportion between guilt and punishment—the severe sentences solemnly attached to certain transgressions were probably *necessary*, as sanctions,—rare in proportion to their severity—of certain laws, which, although forming the primary elements of society, or plainly indispensable to its peaceful development, had to contend against the strongest passions, unrestrained, as has been observed, by those pacific interests which, in civilized nations, so powerfully aid the direct restraint of legislation.

With respect to *Idolatry* among the Israelites, it ought always to be borne in mind that approximation to idolatrous customs, was, under the Jewish theocracy, the crime of *leze majesté*; with this peculiar aggravation;—that the offender broke through multiplied restraints, and acted rebellion in the face of ever-present memorials of Him who brought them out of the house of bondage.*

* Actions that led to idolatry were, among the Jews, punished with death;—because idolatry undermined the state—drew after it frightful profligacy—and destroyed the constitu-

6. The next general reflection that must be premised is—that

Many things recorded in the Old Testament without sentence of blame, are not *thence* to be understood as being either enjoined or approved.—There is a tendency, from which perhaps few minds are quite free, to regard all that is recorded in the Old Testament, unaccompanied with sentence of blame, as though it were sanctioned and approved.—This tendency is the natural result of a want of attention to the mixed character of the sacred records.—That it is an error is obvious on the slightest reflection.—The sin of Reuben, barely recorded Gen. xxxv. 22., is not again referred to till his dying father, when predicting the latter days, declares

tion.—Awakening *fatal inclinations* in the hearts of the Hebrews idolatry was like a destructive contagion devouring whole generations with frightful rapidity. It could not be repressed with too much precaution, promptitude, and vigour. The terrible laws against individuals, and even against *houses* and *towns* that failed to oppose the first encroachments of idolatry, resemble *sanitary laws*: and one might imagine them designed to prevent the development of a pestilential malady. The extermination of the Canaanites may be accounted for on the same principle.—CELARIER.

of Reuben, ‘Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel, because thou wentest up to thy father’s bed, then defiledst thou it.’

7. The Sacred Volume is to be honoured as the depository of RELIGIOUS TRUTH. In this view the Scriptures are indeed complete for every age through which they have passed, or shall hereafter pass—being accompanied by His Spirit who ‘filleth all things.’ But it is a most mistaken notion to expect to find in them the correction of errors in natural philosophy and science.—They are designed to make men wise unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth:—and not to enlarge the boundaries of a knowledge of nature, on which the disembodied spirit may hereafter look back, as the narrow pasture of its earth-bound speculation.

The reader is requested to give to the foregoing reflections that place in his mind, that on fair consideration they may seem entitled to,—not so much with a view to any particular application of them, as that he may not hereafter feel called on to abandon a higher position than he is, in reality, warranted in taking up.

THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION.

Gen. i. 1. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

2. *And the earth was without form and void.*

Not coming into view—invisible and unfurnished.—

Philo, Josephus, Jerome.

And darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Gen. ii. 7. *And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.*

The offspring of Creative Power, Man is able to meditate on that solitary and sublime occasion when this world was fashioned and fitted for his habitation.

It seems not material, whether the Mosaic account of the Creation be supposed communicated in the way of *immediate revelation*—or that Moses—under Divine guidance—therein recorded the genuine tradition of the patriarchs. Its place, at the opening of the sacred record entitles it to the reverence of every believer in Revelation.—Yet there is room for cautious reflection. This Divine communication—or patriarchal tradition, was necessarily conveyed

in language of popular acceptance.—The measure and fulness of its disclosures would be necessarily limited by the narrow comprehension of the recipients, and the poverty of their language.—The peculiar composition of the book of Genesis is also to be considered. Some passages among its narratives have been thought to wear a semblance that has been termed monumental, lapidary, and figurative.

The account of the Creation went the full length of all that Moses intended for the people.—It exhibited the heavens and the earth as the work of the ONE GOD; to whom—and not to his work—all worship was due. It exhibited also the subjection of *Matter* to *Mind*; and of *Instinct* to *Spirit*, that was *capax Dei* as Man's was. And it associated the *several parts of Creation*, in the mind of the Hebrew, with the glory of Him who *rested on the seventh day and sanctified it*.

Thus, '*the stars also*,' may be parenthetical, and introduced solely *for the purpose of completing this ascription of the whole visible creation to the Lord*, in opposition to the Sabian superstitions which consisted in the worship of the heavenly bodies.

One whose unwholesome example has largely engaged the attention of our own times, thus writes :

“ It was the comparative insignificance of ourselves, and our world, when placed in comparison with the mighty whole of which it is an atom, that first led me to imagine that our pretensions to *eternity* might be overrated.”*

Was there nothing in conduct, that, if known, might account for this perverse deduction from the noble elements of a far different conclusion?—Was it intended to imply that the magnificent prospects of Astronomy were inconsistent with the belief of a *special, divine intervention* in behalf of a single world, suspended in relation to other orbs a thousand times greater in magnitude?—If this be a fair statement of the objection—let it be considered wherein the stress of it *must* be laid ; as well as the *low, human* philosophy on which it proceeds.—Does it not assume the *Omnipresent* and *Omnipotent* Creator to be liable to distraction by the greatness of His own works?—Does it not measure His interest and care over His works, not by their rank or

* Lord Byron to Mr. Gifford.

dignity of nature—but by their *mere material size*?—Allow the high probability that those heavenly orbs are inhabited by other orders of existence—what is so clear—as that we are ignorant of the conditions of their existence? *Here* only do we know of a being formed in the ‘image of God’ and made ‘a little lower than the Angels,’ struggling between inclinations to evil, and gracious invitations and assistances to that which is good.*

Reverting to the Mosaic accounts:—the readers of Genesis have noticed the pause between the first and the second verse;—between the creation, and re-organization of the Earth. While the *first* declares that the heavens and the earth were *originally* called into existence

* The speculations of thoughtful minds on these high and inscrutable subjects have found an eloquent interpreter in Dr. Chalmers. (*See Discourses on Astronomy viewed in connection with Christian Revelation.*) That author has diffusely opened some interesting glimpses of relations that may *possibly* exist between our globe and the distant wonders of creation—while he has brought the *revelations* of the *Microscope* to bear against that perversion of the discoveries of the *Telescope*, which would persuade us that God can not humble Himself to the things that are on earth.

by the Almighty,—the *second* is felt not only not to forbid, but even to intimate that the material of this earth had existed for some indefinite period before the mandate for *light* to descend upon it.*

The previous revolutions of this globe may possibly be illustrated by geological discoveries. Meanwhile they who desire proof of the recent date of Man, and of our continents, may consult the Essay on the Revolutions of the Globe prefixed by Cuvier to his great work on fossil remains.

On all sides, the believer in the Bible is ad-

* And God said, Let there be *Light* and there was *Light*.—Gen. i. 3. The word here rendered *light* is a different word from that rendered *lights* in the 14th verse—which latter signifies *luminaries* or *light-bearers*.

Rosenmuller thus observes on the 14th verse :—" The words are not to be separated from the rest, or to be rendered—Let there be lights, that is, let lights be made—but rather *Let lights be*, that is, *serve* in the expanse of heaven for distinguishing between day and night—and let them be or *serve* for signs and for seasons. For we are to observe, that the verb *לְהַיְאוֹר* *to be* in construction with the prefix *לְ* *for*, is generally employed to express the direction or determination of a thing to an end, and not the production of a thing—as in Numb. x. 31. Zech. viii. 19. and many other places.

monished to separate and distinguish its declarations from the authority of interpretations, however accredited.—There was a time when Moses was made answerable for fanatic intolerance, and for the superstitions of Christians who did not understand him; and when, in the name of Joshua, the earth was forbidden to revolve, and the philosophic Galileo imprisoned.

THE DELUGE.

“ And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered.”

It was one great object with the infidel writers of the last century to discredit the Mosaic account of an universal deluge. For this the brilliant but superficial Voltaire did not hesitate to advance the most absurd and impossible hypotheses to account for the phenomena presented by the face of the globe.

These phenomena were, however, too various and interesting not to engage the attention of minds better constituted for such researches,

and actuated by a more single and genuine love of science. Accordingly innumerable geological facts and observations have been accumulated by men of science of all countries and opinions.—The country of Voltaire has produced in the celebrated CUVIER a patient and successful investigator of these phenomena—and one to whose decisions it can be no reproach to pay the utmost deference.

That writer—whose researches have had no other object than to unveil nature—is understood to agree with the most eminent authorities on such subjects, in our own country,* as to the great fact of an *universal inundation*.

“ I concur,” says Sir Wm. Jones, “ most heartily with those who insist that in proportion as any fact mentioned in history seems repugnant to the course of nature—or, in one word, miraculous—the stronger evidence is required to induce a rational belief of it ;—but we hear, without incredulity, that cities have been overwhelmed by eruptions from burning mountains, territories laid waste by hurricanes, and

* See Buckland, Reliq. Diluv. p. 228.

whole islands depopulated by earthquakes.—If, then, we look at the firmament sprinkled with innumerable stars; if we conclude by a fair analogy that every star is a sun, attracting, like our's, a system of inhabited planets; and if our ardent fancy, soaring hand in hand with sound reason, waft us beyond the visible sphere into regions of immensity, disclosing other celestial expanses, and other systems of suns and worlds on all sides without number or end; we cannot but consider the *submersion* of our little spheroid as an infinitely less event in respect of the immeasurable universe, than the destruction of a city or of an isle in respect of this habitable globe. Let a general flood, however, be supposed improbable in proportion to the magnitude of so ruinous an event, yet the *concurrent evidences* of it are completely adequate to the supposed improbability.*

But a still more express confirmation of the Mosaic account may be discerned in the fact,—that the earliest traditions of the most ancient nations were full of allusion to the *history of Noah*.

* Ninth Anniversary Discourse.

"The two great objects," (says Maurice, *Hist. Ind.*) "that for a long time engaged, or rather absorbed the attention of the renovated and grateful race of man, were the stupendous events of the Deluge, and the miraculous preservation of the patriarchal family in the ark. The memorials of those events in the ancient world were innumerable. They are visible in all the sacred rites of their religion, as well as in most of the solemn festivals instituted by the policy of their legislators. They are sculptured aloft in their temples, and stamped upon their coins. Such an astonishing body of evidence of this nature has been brought together and displayed in the pages of Mr. Bryant, that further observations on that head are unnecessary."

THE CIRCUMCISION.

IN the 17th chapter of Genesis, we read the promises to Abraham. "Behold, my covenant is with thee," and, "thou shalt be a father of many nations," and, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed

after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be *a God unto thee*, and unto thy *seed after thee*."

The command to Abraham, that himself and every man-child of his house, and his seed after him, should be '*circumcised*,' follows in the same chapter.

This command must have seemed to take away the prospect of '*a seed after him*,' in whom the promises were to be fulfilled.—In this respect, the appointment of CIRCUMCISION was the trial of Abraham's faith, and the seal of the righteousness which he had '*yet being uncircumcised*.' It is to extol this triumph of Abraham's faith that the Scripture observes, *he was ninety and nine years old when he was circumcised*.

To the family and descendants of the Patriarch, CIRCUMCISION became accordingly the seal of the Divine Promise—and a *secret* sign—known to God—of a covenant of holiness, or *separation* to his service.

Of this *spiritual separation* or *holiness*, bodily cleanliness was the understood and appropriate symbol. It would be especially so to the de-

scendants of *Abraham*: while to others, the *effect* of this practice as conducing to *cleanliness*, and preserving from certain disorders, may have been sufficient to lead to its adoption, when they saw that it did not prevent the multiplication of Abraham's posterity. This would be especially likely in Egypt; where also motives of a religious character would co-operate with these inducements.

We are told by Herodotus* that the Syrians of Palestine, acknowledged to have received this rite from the Egyptians. But as he wrote from the reports of the Egyptian priests,—and assigned *cleanliness* as the *principal* if not the only motive for its observance, (a cause adequate to account for its adoption, but not, as we think, for its first institution)—and as the Egyptians and other nations appear to have observed or neglected it *at will*,—we seem compelled to look to the Mosaic account for the *authority*, under which it was first established.

The Egyptians delayed circumcision till the

* It does not appear that Herodotus traversed Judea. The Samaritans at that time occupied a part of Palestine, whither the Jews had recently returned from their captivity.

13th year; which is one of the evidences that it rested with them on grounds of expediency. The Arabians did the same—but in imitation of their forefather Ishmael. (See Gen. xvii. 25.) At a very early period Egypt had been conquered by the Arabians; and from them, it is probable the Egyptians learned this singular rite.

The peculiar grounds and reason of the appointment, will only be understood by those who can elevate their thoughts to the contemplation of an economy they have not themselves experienced. Its real meaning received progressive illustration from every accession of religious light upon the sinful nature of Man, which needed the casting away of ‘the filthiness of the flesh,’ and ‘the circumcision of the heart:’—and it may be regarded as one of the most striking evidences of the *consistency* of the Divine dispensations.

SODOM AND GOMORRHA. GEN. XIX.

THE fate of Sodom and Gomorrhah *turned into ashes*, (2. Pet. ii. 6.) and *set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*, (Jude)

is one of those judgments which it has pleased God to leave recorded in appearances in nature. "The south of Syria, that is the hollow through which the Jordan flows, is a country of volcanoes. The bituminous and sulphureous sources of the lake Asphaltites, the lava, the pumice stones thrown upon its banks, and the hot bath of Tabaria, demonstrate that this valley has been the seat of a subterraneous fire which is *not yet extinguished*. Clouds of smoke are often observed to issue from the lake, and new crevices to be formed upon its banks.

"If conjectures in such cases were not too liable to error, we might suspect that the whole valley has been formed only by a violent sinking of a country which formerly poured the Jordan into the Mediterranean. It appears certain at least, that the catastrophe of five cities destroyed by fire must have been occasioned by the eruption of a volcano then burning. Strabo expressly says, that the tradition of the inhabitants of the country was, that formerly the valley of the lake was peopled by thirteen flourishing cities, and that they were swallowed up by a volcano. This

account seems to be confirmed by the quantities of *ruins* still found by travellers on the western border. These eruptions have ceased long since—but earthquakes, which usually succeed them, still continue to be felt at intervals in this country.”—*Volney’s Travels*.*

Let the reader turn to the 13th chapter of Genesis, and see how incidentally the narrative records Lot’s lifting up his eyes, and beholding all the plain of Jordan “*well watered every where, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.*”

The account of the country by Volney is esteemed among the most authentic and accurate;—and his testimony to the actual appearance of the country is the more valuable as a *confirmation* of the Bible, from his having partaken of that *anti-christian* zeal for which the last century was so unhappily remarkable.

In the passage quoted from his travels we

* *Tacitus* reports that the cities of the plain were burnt by stroke of *thunderbolts* from Heaven—that they were set on fire and consumed by *lightning*.

have “*a fire not yet extinguished*”—the “*ruins*” of towns, certainly prior to this awful catastrophe; and yet no memory or story of the event to oppose to that of the Bible.—It is true that Volney (perhaps to discredit the narrative in Genesis) dwells on the *volcanic* origin of which he sees the signs. But this is no way irreconcilable with the Scripture account, which *Leclerc* would understand as follows: The vale being full of ‘slime-pits’ (see *Gen.* xiv. 10.) or places whence Naptha and Bitumen were extracted, was universally impregnated with igneous matter; and the lightning darting upon it, or flashing along the surface of it, kindled the combustible parts, which had the fearful effect of turning this once enchanting paradise into a loathsome lake.

In the judgment on Lot’s wife, we are to observe, that the word rendered *pillar*, signifies any mass, however formless.

GENESIS XXXVI. 31. ET SEQ.

THE mention here made of ‘Kings over the children of Israel’—is plainly subsequent to the

time of Moses, and inserted by a later hand. The evidence of the genuineness and authenticity of the books of Moses would not be invalidated, if we suppose,—what indeed is highly probable,—that several such passages were inserted by transcribers, or, perhaps, by Ezra.

It is probable that the Jews regarded this passage as an annotation on the sacred record; an addition as well understood as that which subjoined to the book of Deuteronomy the account of the *death of Moses*.

See also Gen. xxii. 14. Exod. xvi. 35. Deut. ii. 12, passages which may have been cast in by way of parenthesis for the illustration of the text. On the word *Dan*, Gen. xiv. 14, see Bishop Watson (Letter 3d) who suggests that the word may in this place be the name of a *stream* or *river*. Dr. Prideaux was, however, of opinion, that the ancient name *Laish*, stood in the original copy of Moses, and that in this and one or two other passages, Ezra substituted the more modern name for the old name which had become obsolete.

After the time of Ezra, the sacred books were more carefully guarded from such addi-

tions :—and in more recent times, the Masoretic notes, which marked the number of verses, words, and letters, the middle verse, and repetitions, in each book, may be instanced in proof of the vigilance with which the Jews preserved their sacred writings from secret corruption or unauthorised additions.*

EGYPT.


IN the 12th chapter of Genesis we have the earliest mention of the kingdom of Egypt. It is well known that the pride of ancient nations led them to extravagant claims to an antiquity irreconcilable with the inference generally deduced from the writings of Moses. We say the inference generally deduced—because we are not furnished with the necessary elements for *precise* chronology.†

* I distinguish from *unauthorised* additions, such as were made by public authority—or, originated in the *arrangement* or *classification* of the sacred writings—which appears to have been regulated on principles we are very little acquainted with.

† Manuscripts and ancient versions offer the materials for several computations differing by some centuries.

The eminent men who accompanied the French expedition to Egypt were led to form very high estimates of the antiquity of the monuments of that country.—The famous Zodiacs of Esne and Dendera, in particular, appeared to them to offer the evidence of an almost incalculable antiquity. This discovery was published as decisive of the question, and as tracing Egyptian civilization to a period many ages prior to the Deluge.

But within these few years, and especially since one of these Zodiacs has been brought to Europe and subjected to inspection, since the researches of travellers have enabled other scholars to study a vast number of Egyptian papyri, mummies, tombs, and hieroglyphics, the question has changed its aspect ;—and it is in favour of Genesis that it has been decided. The Zodiacs have been compared with the explanations of their learned admirers ;—doubts have arisen and multiplied ;—the calculations have been gone over and found inaccurate ;—various hypotheses have been tried and abandoned, and it was agreed that no dependance



could be placed on the extreme antiquity of these Zodiacs ; when two distinguished scholars, possessing great advantages in the treasures with which the museums of Europe have been latterly enriched, suddenly raised the veil that covered the history of these enigmas of the ancient world. Certainly no one suspected that on the face of temples erected it was said 3000 years before Christ, there would be discovered the names of Ptolemy, Cleopatra, and Trajan—yet this is the fact.—M. Letronne, in comparing the construction of these monuments with the Greek inscriptions found on some of them—M. Champollion, in ascertaining the signification of the three classes of hieroglyphics with which they are covered—have arrived at the *same* result.—By a remarkable coincidence, learned men (of our own country) have at the same time succeeded in decyphering the *same names* by unconnected efforts and different methods. Travellers have unknowingly confirmed these discoveries by manuscripts and mummies lately brought to Europe ;—and it has been clearly demonstrated that the too cele-

brated Zodiacs must have been framed *subsequent to the Christian Era*.*

The extravagant pretensions founded on the astronomical tables of the Hindoos, have been in like manner dissipated by the closer investigations of distinguished scholars, 'who have applied themselves to the study of Hindu literature and science.—See the *Asiatic Researches*, Vols. VI. and VIII., and a remarkable passage quoted by Archbishop Magee, from Laplace.—*Exposition du Systeme du Monde*, pp. 293-4.

MAGICIANS OF EGYPT.

Exod. *Now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.*

THE Magicians appear to have had notice of the miracles of Aaron and Moses, ch. vii. 11, and by their enchantments they did '*in like manner*,' and '*so*' as Moses and Aaron had done. In the East many persons at this day acquire singular control over serpents, making them

* See more on this subject in Cellarier, *Introd. a la Lecture des Livres Saints*, 8vo. Berne, 1832.

dance, &c. to music: Egypt was the land of creeping things; and it is, perhaps, no incredible supposition that the magicians drugged small serpents into torpor, in which state they would resemble rods, and on being suddenly cast down, would resume their natural motion. We read that Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

From the 20th verse it must appear, that the turning water into (resemblance of) blood could only have been performed by the Egyptians in *small* quantities, obtained by digging near the river:—a feat not more surprising than many that are recorded and well known.

The *frogs* might be easily introduced:—but in the fourth plague of *lice*, the magicians are constrained to acknowledge the 'finger of God,' and we hear no more of their attempts.

THE HARDENING PHARAOH'S HEART.

THE hardening of Pharaoh's heart must be conciliated with Pharaoh's hardening his heart yet more. (Exod. viii. 15. 1 Sam. vi. 6.) Any sense of the *first* expression that is not consistent

with the *second*, cannot be the true sense of the writer. The subject belongs properly to the commentator, and has been ably illustrated.

See *Fathers of the Eng. Church*, vol. 1. Dr. Barnes, p. 618.

The *borrowing*, or more correctly, the asking* or desiring *jewels, ornaments*, or vessels of gold and silver for sacrificing—should be regarded in connexion with the oppressions the Israelites had endured. Probably it was not more than an equivalent for their severely exacted labours.—The eastern custom of *presents* should not be forgotten. See 2 Chron. ix. 12.'

'God gave them favour in the sight of the Egyptians,' and, if presents, they were the *signs of honour* to a people whom God had so signally distinguished.

The different stations of the Israelites in their journeyings may still be traced in the wilderness. See Burckhardt's Travels.

* Such is the general signification of the word.—In the three texts relative to this transaction, the Seventy—and in two of the three the Vulgate render it by a term of similar import.

It is the same word as is rendered in the 2d Psalm, "*Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.*"

THE GIVING OF THE LAW.

FROM the Exodus we pass to the Giving of the Law.

‘It appears incredible to many,’ says Bishop Watson, ‘that God Almighty should have had colloquial intercourse with our first parents; that He should have contracted a kind of friendship for the Patriarchs, and entered into covenant with them, and should have so far demeaned himself as to give to the Jews a burdensome ritual of worship, statutes, and ordinances, many of which seem to be beneath the dignity of His attention, unimportant and impolitic.’

The reader should turn to the third general reflection, which applies to the colloquial familiarity objected to.

In the early history of mankind, it appears from the Bible that God often made himself sensibly present to man,—under some external—generally the human form. It was the judgment of Christian antiquity, that these appearances were of the second person in the Trinity;—an opinion perhaps founded on that declara-

tion of the New Testament, “No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”—It is sufficient for our purpose to observe, that the Jewish nation *must* have held the belief of these appearances consistently with the conviction that “the heaven of heavens could not contain” the Almighty Being whom they worshipped.—See the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple, and many other passages.

Undoubtedly, the minute directions of the Levitical law had reference to *cotemporary reasons*, which must, in a great degree, elude our researches at a distance of three thousand years. Let any one imagine the difficulties our own laws would present to a remote posterity without the commentary of our historical literature.—Now the literature of the Jews was, with scarce any exception, limited to their sacred books.

The Divine Lawgiver, whose sanction, at the least, was extended to all the enactments of the Levitical code, *has permitted us to know the ruling design of the whole scheme*;—and, even at this distant period, an attentive consideration

of the circumstances may discover the reasons of many of the most singular injunctions and prohibitions.

When men speak of the *burdensome ritual* of that nation, it were to be wished that they could compare the burthens of the Levitical law with that bondage of slavery and superstition from which the nation had been liberated, but by which they continued for so many ages surrounded.

The ejaculation of Moses, ‘What nation is there so great, that hath the Lord so *nigh* unto them,’ seems to suggest comparison with those nations that had departed from the worship of the true God. Now it everywhere appears that, in the time of Moses, idolatry and superstition had been reduced from their first vague forms into an abominable system of cruel and degrading slavery;—divinings—observing of times—cuttings of the flesh—and even human sacrifices. In the time of Elijah we incidentally learn that the service of Baal required *four hundred and fifty* priests,—and several reasons make it highly probable that the idolatrous rites of the Egyptian and Canaanitish worship, besides

their debasing character, were far more burthensome than those of the Mosaic institution.

It might appear then that the various minute observances enjoined in so many constantly recurring acts of life formed a species of net-work thrown over the whole nation;—not heavy in any one part—but giving notice, and warning, and impeding the least declension towards idolatry.

The Levitical law related solely to the public and national worship.—It is an agreed point that the purifications prescribed by its ritual had reference only to such legal impurities as were held to disqualify from joining in public worship.—Some readers may require to be informed that the words, “cut off from my people,” or “from the congregation,” are thought to have often signified only excommunication from the covenanted advantages of the national worship; at the same time that for all transgressions of the ceremonial law a *standing means of grace and restoration* was always at hand.

But the same just comparison with prevailing laws and customs is requisite—if we would form a just opinion of the spirit of the Mosaic laws.

Thus, it is known that the parental authority was in early times absolute, and extended to the power of life and death. It was then a most wise amelioration of existing usages to require the father and mother should both together* accuse the son who was 'stubborn and rebellious, a glutton and a drunkard;'—that the elders alone should judge the accusation, and condemn him to be stoned.

Our fifth general reflection should be considered.

The like remark is applicable to that affecting regulation in the 21st chapter of Deuteronomy, which so touchingly exhibits the mercy of the Divine Lawgiver in the midst of the sternness and violence of human passions;—Compare that humane regulation with the unbridled lust of a barbarous people in the hour of conquest.

The *lex talionis*, the rudest and simplest form of justice—with the cities of refuge—are characteristics of the standard of civilization.

The concessions made by Moses to the gross-

* The restriction seems to have operated the extinction of the custom.—No instance appears in the Jewish history.

ness of the age, were visibly to the advantage of morals; to extirpate worse evils. His concessions are so made as to modify,—restrain,—and in time destroy what he awhile allows. He allows Polygamy—but limits it; he secures the rights of all the wives and offspring. He permits Divorce—but with forms and usages which by their useful slowness prevent rashness, and give time for anger to cool. Even in his law of Divorce, it is apparent that Moses respected marriage, and sought to make his people comprehend its sanctity.*—Whatever it conceded, the tendency of the Mosaic Law cannot be mistaken. We see it taking an interest in all the oppressed, and enjoining humanity even to *beasts of burthen*. Thus also while the legislation of Moses went to *isolate* the children of Israel, in order to their preservation from the *example* of strangers; we yet read, “ If a *stranger* sojourn in your land ye shall not vex him, but the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be as one born amongst you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for

* Malachi ii. 15, breathes the *real* spirit of the law, in this particular.

ye were strangers in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God."

The Eternal himself is represented as executing the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loving the stranger, giving him food and raiment. See particularly Dent. xxiv. 19—21. xxvi. 11—13. xxvii. 19. Levit. xxiv. 15—22. Num. xv. 15, 16.

The same ameliorating tendency is strikingly manifested in the numerous laws relative to the *Avenger of blood*. We see how Moses—without attempting suddenly to extirpate an instinct stronger than all law—restricts its operation within just and legal limits, and renders it almost nugatory while he seems to confirm its exercise.

But to quit a subject which would well repay a more extended examination, the particular attention of the reader is requested to the following summary of the

EVENTS AT HOREB.

IN the first chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses recites* how Israel journeyed from Horeb,

* Some reasons might be given for preferring the order of events in this *recital*, where it differs from the apparent order

through all that great and terrible wilderness ; —how they were commanded to go up the mount of the Amorites, and possess the land which the Lord sware unto their fathers ; that they were discouraged by the report brought by their spies of the walled towns of the Amorites, so that they murmured and would not go up, notwithstanding Moses reminded them of the Lord, who went before them, and of all he had done for them in Egypt, and in the wilderness, where says Moses, ‘ He bare thee as a man doth bear his son.’ But they did not believe the Lord their God. Wherefore the Lord was wroth, and commanded them to turn again into the wilderness. Then they said, We have sinned against the Lord, we will go up and fight. But the Lord said, Go not up, for I am not among you ; but they went up presumptuously and were driven back.

Moses describes their journeyings—the prohibitions against meddling with the various people that they passed near—until (ch. ii. ver. 25.) the Lord declares that He will begin

in the other books, in which the statutes in force may have been placed together, although delivered at different times.

to put the dread of them upon the nations.—Moses then relates how he sent messengers to Sihon, king of Heshbon, praying to pass through unto the land which God had given them, and offering to pay for the food and water they might require. But Sihon would not let them pass, for God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate that He might deliver him into the hand of the Israelites.

And the children of Israel smote him and his people, and utterly destroyed every 'city of men, women and little ones,'* and took his cattle and his spoil. Then they turned, and Og the king of Bashan came out against them, and the Lord delivered him into their hands, and they smote him till none was left to him remaining.

Now therefore—continues Moses, (ch. iv.)—Hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and judgments which I teach you. Ye shall not add nor diminish aught from them, &c. And again, Only take heed lest thou forget the things thine eyes have seen, but teach them to thy sons and to thy sons' sons—specially the

* *Heb.*

day that thou stoodest in Horeb,* when the Lord said, Gather the people together and I will make them hear, that they may fear me all their days. And ye came near and stood under the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with clouds and thick darkness. And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire : Ye heard the voice of the words but saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice. And He declared unto you His Covenant even *Ten Commandments*.—And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. And (ch. v.) Moses said, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb, and the Lord talked with you face to face, (an expression which must be understood consistently with their seeing no similitude,) saying, *I am the Lord your God*.—The TEN COMMANDMENTS follow.—“ These words,” continues Moses, “ the Lord spake unto all your assembly, in the mount,

* Sinai and Horeb appear to have been two peaks of the same mountain.

out of the midst of the fire, and of the cloud and of the thick darkness, with a great voice, and **HE ADDED NO MORE.**—And He wrote them on two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.”

The 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters are a spiritual commentary on the Ten Commandments.—In the 9th the people are reminded, that not for their righteousness, but for the wickedness of the nations the Lord drove them out.

“Understand,” says Moses, “that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiff-necked people;—and he recalls their provocation from Egypt unto this place.—Also **IN HOREB** ye provoked the Lord to wrath, so that the Lord was angry with you to have destroyed you.”

To this provocation in Horeb, the reader's attention is particularly solicited.

The people had said—*All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.* (Exod. xix. 8.) They had heard the voice of the Lord declaring His covenant, and commanding them to do it—even **TEN COMMANDMENTS**—*He added no more.*

But while Moses delayed to come down from the mount they corrupted themselves, and made a molten image.

And the Lord said—Let me alone, that I may destroy them. And Moses came down from the mount, having in his hands the two tables of the Covenant written by the finger of God, and he saw the calf and the dancing, and his anger waxed hot, and he brake the tables at the foot of the mount, *Exod. xxxii. 19.*

The expressive action denoted that the Covenant, even of ten commandments, to which as we read God *added no more*, was now broken.—The people had condemned themselves as unfit for such a dispensation as should rest upon the simple sanctions of reason and conscience,—shewing plainly, that like as children must be governed with lower restrictions, they needed the bondage of a lower and more immediate religious restraint.—Accustomed to the pomp of Egyptian worship, they might have despised the simplicity of the Decalogue.—Their eyes, as *Ezekiel* tells us, were after their fathers' idols.*

* Moses's covering his face with a veil, is an incident that deserves attention. Compare *2 Cor. iii. 13.* to end.

Recovering at once his authority, Moses grinds the calf they had made into powder, and casts it into the brook that descended out of the mountain, (probably the very stream that God had miraculously opened at the touch of Moses's rod.) Thus did Moses cause the Israelites to 'drink of their sin.'

Passing over this significant action, we read :

And Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on the Lord's side. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. They had not turned aside ; and now, at the command of Moses, they pass through the camp and slay three thousand of the people ;—for Moses had said, '*consecrate yourselves to-day unto the Lord.*'

And Moses said unto the Lord—Oh this people have sinned a great sin ;—(Exod. xxxii. 31.) and he fell down before the Lord for forty days and forty nights, and the Lord hearkened unto him that time also : (Deut. x. 10.) " And the Lord said unto me, *Hew thee* two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount ; and *make thee an ark of wood*, and I will write on the tables the

words which were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark, &c." Deut. x. 1, 2.

And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made, and there they be. Deut. x. 5.

At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the Covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord, to minister unto him and to bless his name unto this day. Deut. x. 8.

Here we learn that but for the prayer He put into Moses's heart, God would have destroyed the whole nation.—He now again enters into Covenant with them,—but some remarkable differences are observed. Moses is directed to *hew* the tables of stone. He is to make an *ark* of wood;—and, while the *same words that were on the first, are written on the tables*, Moses is commanded to *put them in the ark*;—and finally the Levites are appointed to bear the ark and to *stand before the Lord*.

Here we see the establishment of the Levitical services, with their consequences, *ritual*

observances. We recognize the necessity of such a ritual as should extend in all directions, as a hedge against superstitious or idolatrous practices. And we see the highest honour done to the simpler truths of the MORAL COMMANDMENTS, by their being deposited in an ark, and borne as the sacred mysteries of the Egyptian worship were afterwards borne, in their religious processions.

Thus it pleased God to provide that at the foot of Horeb solemn trial should be had, and conviction recorded of the dulness of the people, and their need of restrictive institutions to preserve them from apostasy and idolatry.*

THE GLORY OF THE LORD.

It is remarkable that this memorable intercession and renewal of Covenant, took place on the same occasion on which Moses preferred

* By the expressions *I gave them statutes not good, and judgments whereby they should not live*, (Ezek. xx. 25.) some have understood the *ceremonial* in contradistinction from the *moral* law. But the context, compared with 2 Kings xvii. 8, seems to prove that *idolatrous rites* were rather intended. The passage of *Ezekiel* is dwelt on by T. Paine.

the petition that God would shew him His way, (Exod. xxxiii. 13.) or as in the 18th verse, His *glory*:

‘ I beseech thee shew me thy glory.

‘ And He said—I will make all my goodness pass before thee,—and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious^s on whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy; and He said, Thou canst not see *my face*, for there shall no man see me and live. And the Lord said, Behold a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock, and it shall come to pass while my glory passeth by that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my *back parts*, but my face shall not be seen.’

A writer is to be presumed consistent with himself.—This presumption is of allowed force against any construction of a single passage at variance with the *general tenor* of a writing,—but its force is immensely increased if the construction make the writer contradict himself in the very same passage;—as would be the

case if we were to take the latter words in their lower sense. For in the 20th verse we find it expressly declared, '*Thou canst not see my face*, for no man can see me and live';—nor is it trifling to notice that this declaration is couched in the form, and has all the force of a comprehensive negation—'*Thou canst not—No man can see me.*'

Now, the petition of Moses may assist us to understand the answer. It is, '*Shew me Thy way that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight,*' and again, '*I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory.*'

It has already been observed that the Lord's speaking to Israel *face to face*, (Deut. v. 4.) must be understood so as to be consistent with the *thick darkness* mentioned verse 22; and also with their seeing no *similitude*: the words *face to face* being used adverbially, to denote directness of communication. Such directness of communication is plainly the only sense of the words in Ex. xxxiii. 11, consistent with the cloudy pillar mentioned in verse 9 of the same chapter.

The words, *Thou canst not see my face*, and

no man can see me, must, therefore, be here taken in a higher sense,—as synonymous with “Thy glory;”—to which, in the answer, they in fact apply.

Hence, the words ‘*Shew me Thy glory*,’ may be meant of the Essence and Character of the Deity :—and certainly it was not unnatural that Moses, who was learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians, should desire some such visible manifestation of the Divine Nature, as, in the way of the symbolic characters of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, might convey the real nature and attributes of God, just as the symbols of the Egyptian temples denoted by well understood signs the various qualities and influences ascribed to their gods. The 19th and 20th verses would therefore carry something like the following meaning :

‘I will make all my Goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of the Lord before thee; and—I will be gracious on whom I *will* be gracious, and will *shew* mercy on whom I *will* shew mercy.’

My mercies are not like the qualities supposed *naturally* pertaining to this or that god

of the Gentiles,—but DISCRIMINATING and JUDICIAL.—‘ I will be gracious on whom I *will* be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I *will* shew mercy.’—Thou canst not know My Essence.—‘ Behold a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock,—and while My *Glory*’—(some more immediate manifestation of My Presence,—or probably, of God’s moral attributes *veiled as they were in Jesus**)—‘ passeth by’—I will keep thee safe, and will cover thee by My power,—and thou shalt know Me as a man knoweth *one who goes before him*, in *dark* and *general outline*, and in the *works he leaves behind him*. Thou shalt see—not my full Glory and Essence—but my *Attributes*, as they may be inferred from my *Providence*, and from my *dealings with Man*.†

* The glory of God is to be acknowledged in every mode of Divine manifestation, Holy Severity included.—‘ The ministration engraven on stones,’ i. e. the *moral law* ‘ was glorious.’—*We* have ‘ the light of the knowledge of the *glory of God* in the *face of Jesus Christ*.’ In Him, Mercy and Truth are met together.

† Agreeably to this view, although in this direction curtailed in comprehension, Philo-Judæus interpreted the passage, “ Thou shalt note the *effects* that proceed from my wisdom and

The fulfilment of this promise to Moses is related in the following chapter.

And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with Moses there and proclaimed the Name of the Lord, and the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed—

“The Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious,

“Long suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth,

“Keeping Mercy for thousands,

“Forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.”

The words that follow in our translation are, “that will by no means clear *the guilty*.”—If we turn to the original, we find it elliptical and obscure; the last two words in the translation being supplied by the translators. The words, according to Maimonides, belong still to the loving-kindness of God, as all the foregoing do; signifying that, when He doth

power.” Thus, also, *Elias Cretensis*, as quoted by Bishop Patrick, observes, that the *face of God* signifies His Essence, before the beginning of the world, and His *hinder parts*, His Creation and Providence in the government of the world.

punish, *He will not UTTERLY destroy and make desolate.*

If this interpretation—which is not without support from other quarters*—be permitted to stand; the present writer would humbly offer a suggestion with regard to the words immediately following: *visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation*;—expressions which have more or less embarrassed most readers of the Bible.

It seems worth considering, whether these words—occurring in a passage of which four-fifths are declaratory of God's mercy and long suffering—may not likewise have been intended, and understood, of the merciful DELAY of God's judgments on National Apostacy.

* See Poole's Annotations where this sense is adopted.

See also Bagster's Bible which has the following note:—*' Excellently rendered by Dr. Geddes, acquitting him who is not innocent, which translation he justifies by a supposed ellipsis of asher, ' who'—and a slight change of the points.—Such also is nearly the interpretation of Lud. de Dieu, which is approved by Rosenmuller.'*

The present writer is little prepared to offer any opinion on this criticism.

Various considerations do, indeed, favour this opinion;—and though content that it should stand before the candour of more competent scholars to be adopted or dismissed as may seem fit,—he thinks he shall be excused, if he recommend the suggestion upon the following grounds.

1. That the expressions, *visiting the iniquities, &c.* carry the sense of signal and National judgments;—consistently with which their first employment was on occasion of God's covenant with the Nation, when He had brought them out of the land of Egypt.*

* The words, as they stand, Exod. xx. 5, are literally, 'A jealous God—visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the sons—on the thirds and on the fourths to my haters.'—The sense may be as follows:—a jealous God, visiting for national apostasy *even* in the third and fourth generation—if after so long *waiting to be gracious*, ye shall be 'the children of your fathers,' and 'of them that hate me.' The words in Exod. xx. contain, indeed, a denunciation: the Nation were not to account that God would *not* punish national delinquencies, though His judgments might be delayed till the third or fourth generation;—those expressions conveying, it is conceived, the sense of delay, merciful delay, rather than extension of punishment.

2. That the next appearance of the words is in the passage before us;—immediately after God had renewed His covenant with His people, —postponing judgment, with the solemn warning, “ nevertheless, in the day when I visit will I visit their sin upon them.”

3. That the whole passage (Ex. xxxiv.)—and particularly the declaration that God would visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation—is apparently pleaded by Moses in a remarkable prayer, among the grounds of hope that God would spare His people.* The reader should turn to Numb. xiv. 17—20.

4. That the Scriptures record instances of National judgments *so deferred*, to give time for national repentance:—that the Babylonian captivity took place in the third and fourth generation from the wicked reign of Manasseh, with which the historian of the Book of Kings *has expressly connected it*; (2d book, ch. xxiv. 3,) that the like ‘ space for repentance ’ may be supposed to have preceded the carrying away

* Bishop Patrick has noticed this remarkable fact.

of the ten tribes;—and that the iniquity of the Amorites being ‘not yet full,’ appears connected with the promise of their land to Abraham’s seed in the *fourth generation*, whatever be the precise meaning of these words.

5. That the sense commonly attached to the words, ‘visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children’—is not only unsupported by any clear testimony of parallel passages, but—to say the least—is not easily reconciled with the plain and express language of the Bible. See Exod. xxxii. 33. Ezek. xviii. 20.*

* The only sense he is inclined to acknowledge in Jerem. xxxii. 18, is a solemn warning of that continuing judging among the Nations, which after we are dead and forgotten, will visit for the unrepented national apostacy, we contributed to introduce, and our children *inherit* and *continue*.—‘Ah, Lord God, behold Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee. Thou shewest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them, the great, the mighty God, the Lord of Hosts is His name.’—There is *one* sense the prophet had not in view;—and we collect it from the next verse—‘Great in council and mighty in works, for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give *every one according to his ways* and according to the fruit of his doings.’

On these grounds the writer is disposed to regard the peculiar expressions, *visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation*, as conveying the sense of merciful *Delay* of National judgments. At the same time he would not be understood to deny the possibility of another construction of the text exempt from the objections to which the common interpretation seems liable.—In such case he has no wish to obtrude his (*present*) views.—The reader will bear in mind that it will not be necessary to depart from the received translation,—the sense being supposed to be contained in the following slight paraphrase.

‘The Lord,—the Lord God,—Merciful and Gracious,—Long Suffering and abundant in Goodness and Truth,—Keeping Mercy for Thousands,—forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin;—(in punishing) not utterly destroying and making desolate;—delaying to visit with national judgments the iniquities of the fathers until the times of their children and their children's children, even to the third and fourth generation.’

And Moses made haste and bowed down his head toward the earth, and worshipped—and he said, “ *If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go up among us.*”

In the view here taken, it cannot be intended to question, that God may so order and predict events, as that the just judgments on a guilty offspring, or, the providential afflictions and death of such as are innocent, may exhibit the *effects of sin*, and record the *anger of God* against the sin of the parents ;—and so be, in this sense, and in the distress attending their first announcement, the *Punishment* of such sin. The prediction after the murder of Uriah, that the sword should not depart from the house of David, and the judgments on the house of Ahab, may have been of this kind. But such instances were undoubtedly *special*: and all that is here maintained is, that it is not the declared rule of God’s dealings to visit the punishment of the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.—The limitation implied in the words, *unto the third and fourth generation* appears, in any view, to

be *not* agreeable to fact, and but poorly explained by the consideration, that the parents could not hope to see more of their posterity.

By *providential afflictions* are above meant all that are resolvable into God's purpose to vary the circumstances of different individuals' probation. Poverty and Disease inherited by the offspring of profligate parents are of this kind.—They are, in truth, *trials*, and only naturally accounted afflictions;—and may be more than balanced by the secret compensations of God's grace.

THE INSTITUTIONS OF MOSES.

THE events at Horeb admit us to the ruling design of the *Levitical Law*, and furnish a key to the reasons of many of its most singular enactments.

1. The hospitality and the superstitions of the hearth were in the early ages so blended together, that to live with any one was commonly to have 'his gods as our gods.' But the worship of the chosen people was to be

unadulterate: It was therefore of the most evident necessity that the Law should be *Separative*.

2. It was *Religious* or *Spiritual*, for the glory of God and for the gradual education of the minds of His servants.

3. It was both *Commemorative* and *Typical*, or *Prophetical*, for the instruction and confirmation in the faith, of all ages.

And, FIRST, the Mosaic Law was *Separative*.

Now the same reasons that led to the establishment of institutions separative from idolatry, would prevent the recording of precise information as to the practices forbidden; an obvious reflection, which accounts for our being obliged to glean from other writers, the scattered notices of idolatrous usages, which were probably in all times darkly shrouded in mystery and secrecy.

Thus, we learn from ancient writers that the Priests of Isis shaved their heads. The Syrians and Idumeans did the same. The Macæ and Arabians left only a tuft at the crown of the head, in imitation of Bacchus. It was a common practice to cut off the hair, throwing it into the

sepulchres of the dead, or laying it on the breast of the corpse as an offering to infernal demons. In mournings for the dead it was also a practice to disfigure and make slashes in the flesh. These 'cuttings of the flesh' were common in heathen rites, and are graphically described in the 18th ch. of 1 Kings. In such customs we see the reasons of the laws that forbade the Levites to make bald their heads—or shave off the corners of their beards—or make any cuttings of their flesh.

Ancient writers inform us, that the Assyrians had generally some characters or marks on their bodies, or figures of the gods to whom they had devoted themselves. Philopater, is said to have ordered the Jews to be marked with ivy in honour of Bacchus. Hence, we learn why the law of Moses said, 'Ye shall not make figures or marks on yourselves.'

The Egyptians sowed different sorts of seeds on a board covered with fine mould, and observing which were destroyed by the heat of the dog-days, refrained from sowing that kind.—But the connexion of the following passage points to a different solution. It is known that

barley and dried grapes were sowed together in honour of Ceres and Bacchus. The Zabians also believed in the favour of the stars and their conjunctions, and in consequence, mixed linen and woollen together in their garments, and wore them in honour of the stars. (Spencer.) In these customs we may detect the origin of the prohibition: 'Thou shalt not sow thy field with different seeds. Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together, nor wear a garment woven of two sorts.' The prohibition may, indeed, have a darker meaning, which can only be conjectured from the known character of idolatrous worship. See Lev. xix. 19.

The surrounding nations delighted in human sacrifices. The reader has probably read of the wicker Moloch of our own ancestors. Among the idolatrous people of Syria, a brazen image was heated red hot and the victim placed in its arms or dragged over or between two fires. Hence the solemn prohibition: 'Thou shalt not make thy children to pass through the fire to their gods.' See Deut. xii. 31.

The Egyptians and other nations were accustomed to kill their sacrifices in the field as

the Hebrews had done till prohibited. Levit. xvii. In the wanderings of the Israelites, all their sacrifices were to be killed at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the blood poured out *unto the Lord*. Even in hunting, the blood of the animal was to be carefully covered with dust.

The eating of sacrifices was accounted a federal rite between the worshipper and the object of his worship. Eating of blood was of sacred and religious uses among idolatrous nations, especially in divinings. The Chaldeans sacrificed men and women, and divined by their entrails. It was a custom among idolaters to seat themselves round a bowl containing the blood of their sacrifices, imagining themselves the guests of Demons, and admitted to the knowledge of coming events. The Massagetes, and probably other nations, ate or rather drank blood in their feasts. The Roman writers take notice of this drinking of blood as a something outlandish, and peculiar to the Arabians and Phœnicians. Hence we may gather why the Law made blood pollution—and prohibited its use as food.

The licentiousness of idolatrous worship is well known. The priests of the heathens had introduced the grossest debauchery into their religious festivals. On some occasions men worshipped in garments of women. This latter practice is solemnly prohibited, and the minute directions for the decent clothing of the Levitical priests are among the things which may have exercised the levity of our own times. See Exod. xxviii. 42, &c.

The practice of planting groves round the 'hills' or 'high places' of heathen worship was ancient and general. Originally suited to inspire religious awe, they had apparently become the scenes of the most shameful profligacy. They were associated with the ideas, and might raise suspicions of similar impurity. The command was therefore positive, 'Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord thy God.'

The Zabians offered seven bats, seven mice, and seven other reptiles, as an offering of peculiar efficacy to the Sun. The Mosaic Law treats these reptiles with the utmost contempt.

Certain animals were used from the earliest

times to represent certain qualities, tempers, or vices. This is evident from the Egyptian hieroglyphics. Others, for reasons which are lost, were esteemed sacred to the gods of the heathen; the eagle to Jupiter, the hawk to Apollo, the owl to Minerva, the dog to Hecate. Of the former class, were probably many animals declared unclean by the law of Moses. The Egyptian belief in the transmigration of souls to the bodies of particular animals should not be forgotten. Others may have been prohibited as food, for their insalubrity. We know not why the law prohibited fish without scales, Lev. xi. 9,—unless the unwholesomeness of such diet, in hot countries, be allowed to explain the prohibition. It is, however, remarkable that the Romans, in their feasts, which they called *Polluctum*, ate only those kinds of fish which had scales. Pliny reports this as an express law of Numa. Herodotus and Porphyry assure us, that the Egyptians also avoided fish without scales.

It is remarked by *Michaelis*, that “Moses reduced the previous customs, and new ordinances into a very simple and natural system,

according to which, all beasts that have their feet completely cloven above as well as below, and at the same time chew the cud, are clean : those which have neither, or indeed want one of these distinguishing marks, unclean. That in so early an age of the world we should find a systematic division of quadrupeds so excellent as never yet, after all the improvements of natural history, to have become obsolete ; but on the contrary, to be still considered as useful by the greatest masters of the science, cannot but be looked upon as truly wonderful."

It is observable, that only such animals as were easily procured are required for sacrifice ; others, such as the hart, the roebuck and fallow-deer, wild goat and wild ox, being allowed for food ; as are also certain kinds of locusts, which are the common food of the people of Syria and Africa.*

In general, creatures of gentle feeding, wholesome and abundant, were allowed as food. In Arabia, the saltness of the waters and aliments

* I have seen at Medinah and Tayf, locust shops, where these animals were sold by measure. In Egypt and Nubia they are only eaten by the poorest beggars.—*Burckhardt*.

rendered the people very susceptible of diseases of the skin. It was no way unworthy of Him, who 'led his people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron,' to direct them in the choice of their food. Some animals may have been disallowed in order that nothing *reputed unclean* might, in the estimation of the people, defile the servants of the true God. Associations rooted 'in the opinions of that age were not always to be disregarded. Such opinions may have been well founded. It is certain they prevailed very widely. Moses forbade the hare. Cesar tells us of the Gauls, '*Leporem gustare fas non putant.*' Moses forbade the eating the flesh of the dog; a custom (says Michaelis) that was in use among the Phœnicians and Carthaginians. The leprosy was preeminently an Egyptian disease: it was often the effect of intemperance; and *swine* were particularly subject to this loathsome disorder. To the Israelite, the least contact with this animal was pollution. The Egyptians and the Eastern nations abhorred it. If an Egyptian touched swine, he plunged into the Nile. Yet the Cretes and Samians venerated it, and the Cyprians offered it to Venus.

Again, we are told that Egypt did not produce oil; the law that enjoined its use in the Jewish sacrifices was therefore *separative*. The Egyptians abstained from wine; the Mosaic ritual prescribed its use. See Numbers xv. Herodotus tells us, that the Egyptians used honey in their sacrifices. This was forbidden by the Jewish law, (Lev. ch. ii.); but there is an allowance of the use of honey *from dates*. Consider the effect of this on an Egyptian and an Israelite joining in sacrifice; whence was this honey? would be the inquiry. But leaven and honey were both ferments, and considered as having contrary qualities to salt. As the latter tended to preservation, so the former to corruption.

The Israelites had turned after the idols of Egypt, and had adored a calf. They are thenceforth to sacrifice one to the Lord.

The Egyptians held it unlawful to sacrifice female calves, because sacred to Isis. The Israelites are instructed on one remarkable occasion to select a *female* calf for their offering.

The thrice repeated prohibition against seeth-

ing a kid in its mother's milk has been variously interpreted. Abarbanel mentions such a custom among ancient idolaters, and something resembling it has been noticed by a modern traveller. Michaelis suggests a different solution; but either will make it *separative*, and designed to attach the Israelite to the *soil* and *products* of Palestine, by weaning them from the customs of Egypt.

The Egyptians lamented over the first-fruits, as at the birth of their first-born. The Israelites are commanded to rejoice on these occasions: and as the idolaters were accustomed to separate some of the first-fruits for magical and filthy purposes, the Israelites are directed to make of them 'an offering to the Lord.'

Lastly, among the institutions that tended to isolate the chosen people, must be placed the *Jubilee*, which gave to every Jew an indefeasible interest in the land of his forefathers.

A remark of MONTESQUIEU, is very applicable. *Une religion chargée de beaucoup de pratiques, attache plus a elle qu'une autre qui l'est moins. On tient beaucoup aux choses dont*

on est continuellement occupé : de la l'obstination tenace des Juifs.

2. The Levitical Law, was RELIGIOUS and SPIRITUAL.

It taught and maintained the feeling of *dependance* for life and blessings. The life of the flesh was declared to be in the blood ; it was to be poured out *before the Lord*.*

The *morning* and *evening* sacrifices were to be offered *day by day* in acknowledgment of constant dependance on the One true God ; instead of that *observance of times* so common among surrounding nations.

The *Cherubim* with their faces bowed towards the mercy-seat, probably indicated the subjection of the heavenly or angelic powers to the Supreme God.

The *legal imperfections* and *impurities*, and

* This solemn appropriation of the blood to the Giver of life is remarkable. It is easy to conceive that it must have powerfully contributed to the respect of human life in a rude and half civilized age. There was no leave to eat flesh till after the Flood. The reserve of blood was then made, with dire judgments on him that was guilty of the blood of man, which might have become, through the new permission, of less estimation.

the ablutions and offerings enjoined, besides their tendency as separative, had undoubtedly a reference to that necessity of *spiritual holiness* of which they were intelligible intimations.

In this way it is probable that the law contained a fund of instruction very imperfectly comprehended by us. This appears even in the reason assigned by Moses for some peculiar prohibitions, "For thou art a *holy* people;" and in his solemn charge to the Israelites to "circumcise the heart."

We are to consider that the Levitical law was the public worship enjoined as part of the national covenant. It in no way superseded, but rather hedged up, that *personal religion* which appears in the books of Moses, and which may be called Abrahamic, in distinction from statutes and judgments superadded in God's covenant with their nation. In this Abrahamic religion, the writer conceives the belief of the existence of the disembodied spirit to have prevailed without any doubt whatever.*

* "The omission of a future state, as a sanction of the law of Moses, results necessarily from the peculiar nature of the dis-

The observance of the *sabbatical year*, was a national act of *faith* and *dependance* upon God.

The Levites, accepted by God in place of the first-born of Israel; the claim to the first-fruits of their increase, and to the fat of the sacrifices for the Lord; were intelligible demands for the best services of His people. Even the exception of fruits, which were not to be offered 'till the fourth year,' confirms the remark; for Philo has observed that, during the first three years, the fruit was not so good, and therefore, could not be presented to the Lord. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, has shewn that all was designed to lead to just conclusions on the nature of God,---the salvation of man,---the guilt of sin,---the neces-

pensation, and from the character of the people to whom it was given. The polytheistic principle of tutelary deities maintained, that their worship was attended with national prosperity. The futility of this, it was the intention of God to display by open and unequivocal demonstration of his Omnipotence. The moral government of Jehovah was to be exhibited on earth by the theocracy which He established. Its very nature required temporal sanctions, and their immediate enforcement:---its object could not be obtained by waiting till the invisible realities of a future state should be unveiled."

sity of atonement ; and of a Mediator between God and man ;—of purity of heart and devotion to God.

The touching the tip of the ear, the right hand, and the right foot of him that sought to be cleansed, were expressive hieroglyphical actions denoting the obligation to *hear*, and *do*, and *go* as God should direct. The same kind of religious instruction was conveyed in the priestly mitre inscribed *Holiness to the Lord*, and in the fringes of the garments embroidered with precepts of the law ; while the lower kinds of restraint, consisting in the observance of particular directions, were all conducive to the great end of religion, so far as they exercised submission to God's appointments, the denial and regulation of the human will, and constant circumspection against occasions of offence. What could more strongly express the *holiness of God*, and the *infirmity of man*, than the appointment of offerings for sins of ignorance. Thus was the law, with its ceremonial, its minute details, and exact measurements, suited constantly to occupy with religious services the attention of a people of low understandings, such as we conceive the Israelites to have been

in the time of Moses :—while it unfolded inexhaustible instruction for such as were led by the privileges of their nation to seek for clearer views of their religion.

3. The Levitical Law was both **COMMEMORATIVE** and **TYPICAL** or **PROPHETIC**.

Thus, the law that enjoined the redemption of the first-born of Israel, by the payment of five shekels for each, was a constant memorial of that night when the Lord passed through and smote the first-born of the Egyptians only: *Exod. xiii.* implying besides the acknowledgment, that Israel had *merited* to share in that awful judgment.

The Passover was a yearly and solemn record of the same event. The blood of the lamb *without blemish* was to be sprinkled on the door-posts of the houses wherein the Israelites did eat it, in memory of God's passing over the dwellings of their fathers on that awful night. They were to eat it in haste, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staves in their hands—for says Moses, 'Thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste, and that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth all the days of thy life.'

The feast of Pentecost followed, fifty days after the Passover,—in memory of the giving of the law to Moses, fifty days after the going up from Egypt.

The feast of Tabernacles—wherein the people were commanded to dwell seven days *in tents*, commemorated, in later times, their fathers' having dwelt in tents in the wilderness.

The typical and prophetic character runs through so much of the Mosaic institutions, that it is only necessary to advert to it thus briefly. The whole spirit of the law was *preparatory*, and pointed to better things.*

Such were the Mosaic Institutions.

It is always to be borne in mind, that they were given to a people, whose minds were bowed by long slavery and oppression, and ac-

* Some learned writers have supposed, that some of the striking external usages of the national worship (for example the carrying of an Ark) were borrowed from the Egyptians. It does not seem necessary that the advocates of the Divine Authority of the Mosaic Institution should oppose this opinion as it appears certain, that such particular directions were in all cases annexed as rendered it impossible to join with an idolater in any one act of worship. Some parts of religious worship would naturally be the mere conventional expression of veneration.

customed and attached to the pomp of Egyptian worship.

To have let loose the minds of such a people in *vague abstractions* and *reasonings*, would not have answered the purpose in view. In this, as in other occasions, God appears to have used the instrumentality of such elements of human character as existed in the circumstances and habits of the chosen people, stooping to *occupy* minds, accustomed to be so occupied, with minute observances,* that thus acquired a kind of religious value, as being enjoined by Divine Authority and rendered to the True God.

* An eminent critic has offered a suggestion, which, if well founded, may be expected to throw great light on the motives of those careful measurements, &c. of the tabernacle and its furniture, which perplex the modern reader of the Bible.

He considers them directed to the establishment of a uniform and immutable standard of weights and measures. *Politically*, the advantage of possessing such a standard would be very great, and the need of it constantly felt; even without supposing Fraud; but as the temptation to fraud must have existed in every state of society, the highest value of such a standard must have consisted in its placing the '*just balance*,' *weights*, and *measures* in every part of the Temple and its furniture; consecrating them before the eyes of the whole nation, and placing them under the protection of God himself.

NUMBERS, CH. XXII.—BALAAM.

THE constitution of the human mind disposes it, involuntarily, to associate things that have a *prima facie* resemblance. The superstitious fables of animals speaking with human voices, reported by Livy, will present themselves to our recollection. Yet the discerning reader will reflect that the reports of Livy were *naked wonders*, unconnected with any thing to be done or suffered. It is apparent, that—so far as its miraculous nature is concerned—the narrative before us is as credible as any miracle recorded in the Bible.

To the writer it appears that the feeling of doubt in regard to it, of which many have at times partaken, is principally owing to their not perceiving any reasons for this *particular kind of miracle*;—coupled with the whole incident's seeming, at first view, totally unconnected with the rest of the narrative, and thence wearing the appearance of an *interpolation*.

There is, however—if he is not mistaken—a something which appears to have been overlooked by commentators; and which, by shew-

ing that this precise miracle was chosen for its peculiar significancy, and correspondence with the whole narrative—will, he confidently trusts, remove all difficulty and embarrassment, where it has hitherto been experienced.

He conceives, then—that there is a remarkable resemblance betwixt this real incident, and that parable of Nathan which drew from the erring David the exclamation, “As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die,” and afterwards the conscience-stricken confession, “I have sinned against the Lord.”

We read that the children of Israel set forward and pitched in the plain of Moab, and Balak, the son of Zippor, was king of the Moabites; he had seen all that Israel had done to the Amorites, and now, agreeable to the superstitions of the age, he sends messengers to Balaam, a prophet of the true God, who appears (ver. 6.) to have been held in a sort of superstitious veneration by the idolatrous people among whom he lived.

Balaam consulted the Lord, (at every step we are reminded of our imperfect knowledge

of things once familiar,) and was commanded not to go. Yet, when princes came more with offers of advancement to himself, Balaam urged them to stay while he *again* waited direction from the Lord.

As in his heart he had already 'forsaken the right way,' and now sought to have the first command reversed, he is suffered to set out:—but we read 'God's anger was kindled against Balaam because he went,' and He contends with him, by an unseen angel, hedging up his way, and making a wall before him (Hos. ii. 6.)—as if to put him on considering the want of simplicity of obedience by which his conduct was marked.

The ass saw the Angel, and gave way; thrice turning out of the way, and then falling down.—Balaam had gone wrong. The *thrice repeated* hindrance did not put him on return to his duty. Perhaps, stifling thoughts that inwardly accused him, his anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. Then the Lord opened the *mouth* of the ass, (or caused certain sounds to proceed thence,) and she said unto Balaam—"What have I done unto thee,

that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass—Because thou hast mocked me; I would there were a sword in my hand for now would I kill thee.—And the ass said, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee? (i. e. turn aside or refuse to bear thee.)—And he said, Nay. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam (as the conscience of David was laid bare by the words, *Thou art the man*), and Balaam saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, with *his* sword drawn in *his* hand, and he bowed down his head and fell flat on his face. And the Angel of the Lord said, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because THY WAY IS PERVERSE BEFORE ME. And the ass saw me and turned from me these *three* times: unless she had turned from me, surely now had I slain *thee* and saved her alive.—And Balaam said unto the Angel, *I have sinned*, for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me. Now, therefore—if it displease thee—I will get me

back again."—Still, however, we see the *disposition* to go with the men.—The more we open the circumstances, the more we become sensible of the analogy:—Balaam himself may have previously borne the yoke of the Lord *unto that day*; but when, being tempted by Balak's promises, he waited again for opposite instructions, did *he* not mock GOD. He himself answers, when (in the 19th verse of the following chapter) he declares to Balak that 'God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent.' When Balaam went with the men, was *he* not perverse in *his* way? as the angel afterward declared: was *he* not forsaking the right way? as St. Peter tells us. That he was only *suffered* to go, not sent, appears plainly from the words, "and God's anger was kindled against Balaam because he went."* The Angel made visible to the ass was a *thrice repeated* striving with Balaam's disobedient purpose; and became the occasion of an expressive self-condemnation,

* I see it stated elsewhere, that in the Hebrew, verbs active often signify permission.

scarcely less instructive than that of David before Nathan.

We read that Balaam's anger was kindled against the ass, and he smote her with a staff.

Then the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam—What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?—and Balaam said, "Because thou hast mocked me; I would I had a *sword* in my hand for now would I kill thee."

Immediately his eyes are opened, and he sees the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and *his* sword drawn in his hand. The Angel declares that he came out to withstand him, because *his* way was *perverse before God*; and that, unless the ass had turned aside, he had slain *him* and saved her alive.—And Balaam said, I have sinned. Yet though told that the Angel of the Lord *withstood* him, and that his way was *perverse*, he seems rather to petition to be allowed to continue his way than to hasten his return. And he is suffered to go. 'He loved the wages of unrighteousness,' he goes on with the princes of Balak, and all that we hear of him, is that Balaam the son

of Beor 'was among the *slain*,' in the war with the Midianitish kings.

The reader will observe, that—unlike the miracles wrought *publicly* as the seal of a *divine mission*, or as a sign to beget faith,—this miracle was rather the instrument of judgment. It was acted secretly between Balaam and the Angel of the Lord, and was probably reported by Balaam himself, and so reached Moses.

THE WARS OF MOSES, &c.

THE wars of Moses, of Joshua, and of the Judges—have been a fertile theme of declamation. The writer has enough of sympathy with the feeling which enters into such declamation, to adopt, most willingly, the sense of the Hebrew, which is, literally, "cities of men, women, and children," Deut. ii. 34. in preference to the usual rendering, which speaks of "utterly destroying the men, and the women, and the little ones of every city." The breaking up and driving out of every *community* of the Canaanitish nations, was *necessary* in order

to the quiet possession of the land, for the purposes designed by God himself.

Bishop Watson has indignantly repelled the monstrous charge which some have attempted to found on Numb. xxxi. 18. The insinuation, is, indeed, directly opposed to the whole tenor of the law and history of the Jews. The male children were put to death;—probably, because, if their lives had been spared, it would have been counted their duty to avenge the death of their parents. The young females were reserved for slavery. The distinction, *who have not known man*, was an attempt to distinguish the innocent from the guilty. See Numb. xxv.

The Israelites were appointed and commanded to execute the judgment of God. Already had His long-suffering waited till the iniquity of these nations *was full*. The frightful catalogue of their crimes is to be collected from the dark prohibitions of Leviticus—“For in all these things the nations were defiled which God cast out before Israel. The land was defiled, therefore did He visit the iniquity thereof upon it,

divine disapprobation ;—and ‘ perhaps no imaginable method could have been more effectual to repress the enormities of nations every way profligate and abandoned, than the thus raising up a people eminently distinguished by the divine favour and protection, to whom it should be an inviolable law, and a fixed point of duty to God, to chastise in all that came into their power the enormities they had committed, and to retort their cruelties upon their own heads ; for this was, in effect, as if God had bared His arm to take signal vengeance on their wickedness.’

JOSHUA, CHAPTER X.

*Abridged from the Fragments annexed to
Calmet’s Dictionary.*

THE miracle of the staying of the sun and moon by Joshua, being a geographical and astronomical miracle, must be examined and vindicated upon *geographical* and *astronomical* principles.

It stands thus, Joshua x. 9, &c.

Joshua went from Gilgal, attacked the

enemy at Gibeon, drove them towards the ascent to Bethoron, to Azekah, to Makkedah. As they were descending from Bethoron a violent hail-storm overtook them; and by this was the chief slaughter of them made. Then spake Joshua to the Lord, and he said, in the eyes of Israel, 'Sun (*shemesh*) in Gibeon continue, and Moon (*irech*) in the valley of Ailun.'—'And the *shemesh* continued, and the *irech* stayed. Is not this recorded in the book of Jasher? And the *shemesh* stayed in the partition (division) of the heavens, and did not make haste to set like unto a whole day;' i. e. it produced a whole *nucthemeron*, or day, (what we should now call of twenty-four hours) *of light*.

This seems to have been the opinion of the author of Ecclesiasticus, ch. xlv. Was not the sun stopped by Joshua, and one *hemera*, day-light, made equal to two? i. e. instead of being *twelve hours* long it was *twenty-four*.

By way of shortening criticism, I assume that,

1. *Shemesh* signifies the light issuing from the sun, not the body of the sun itself; as

Exod. xvi. 21 ; Deut. xxxiii. 14 ; 1 Sam. xi. 9 ; Eccles. xi. 7.

2. Also that *irech* signifies the light reflected from the Moon, not the body of the Moon ; as Deut. xxxiii. 14 ; Isaiah lx. 20.

3. That *cheji*, *division*, may be taken for the horizon.

4. That *Gibeon* was, as its name imports, a hill, or a town situated on a hill.

5. That *Ajalon* was a valley, or a town in a valley. There are five or six Ajalons mentioned in Scripture.

6. The book of *Jasher*, I suppose, contained, among other records, a metrical history of this event ; from which the words are quoted, and which is appealed to, as our Saxon Chronicle might be to establish any particular fact.

There are two words used to denote the Delay of these lights. Solar rays upon Gibeon *stay* (דומ *DUM*). The word expresses equability, evenness, being *LEVEL* : i. e. suppose the sun being at the edge of the horizon, its rays shining upon the hill of Gibeon, appeared level and parallel to the plane of the earth, to the general extended country then within the

spectators' view : q. d. "Solar rays shoot level* upon Gibeon." The use of the word strongly depicts the evening time of the day ; for the solar rays can be level only morning and evening, and this miracle certainly did not happen in the morning. And the solar ray remained level, and the lunar ray (לְמַדֵּי OMED) stayed, continued, subsisted, was sustained or supported in the same condition, maintained itself ; not in the same place, but in the same power, effulgence.†

Thus we have stated the verbal history of

* So Milton :

"Long levelled rule of streaming light."

Euripides (*in Supplices*, l. 660), has the word *καὶν* to express the same idea.

The following passage of our own great Poet is a yet more exact expression of the idea :—

— the setting sun

Slowly descended, and with right aspect

Against the eastern gate of Paradise

Levell'd his evening rays ; it was a rock

Of alabaster piled up to the clouds

Conspicuous far.

PAR. LOST.—Book IV.

† Shakespeare has caught, *from nature*, doubtless, the very image—

"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank."

this event, and to this agree the phenomena of Nature: for, when is the light of the Sun most noticeable, most resplendent upon *elevated objects*?—when the Sun is near to setting. When is the light of the Moon most likely to irradiate a valley?—when the Moon herself is rising high in the heavens.

I hope the reader will grant me, the only thing which I shall beg of him, that Joshua *saw* the objects of which he spake. I mean, that looking towards the Sun, he beheld the place of that luminary, and its rays shining abroad; then, turning toward where the Moon was in the heavens, he beheld that luminary also: so that both luminaries were above the horizon, therefore visible at the time when he uttered these words, ‘Thou sun,’ ‘thou moon,’ &c.

This supposition is, indeed, undeniable. Its *consequences* influence the whole history. It leads us to inquire, first, at what period of the lunar course could such an address take place? secondly, having ascertained the age of the moon, what time of the day does that imply? thirdly, what was the time of the year?

I. It could not be precisely *at* the full of the moon, because the moon when at full, rising when the sun sets, both luminaries could not be visible at the same time. *A fortiori* it could not possibly be *after* the full moon.

It could not possibly be *at* the new moon ; because the moon being then in conjunction with the sun, and her dark side turned toward the earth, no light is deflected from her to render her visible. Neither is the moon visible immediately after her conjunction is passed ; she requires a day or two to make her appearance, and when she does make her appearance her light is not worth wishing for till the time of her first quarter. Moreover, though the new moon rises early in the evening, yet she sets so soon in the night, that long before she could have answered Joshua's purpose, long before morning, she would have disappeared.

This statement restricts the time when the moon could be thus addressed to her second quarter ; the interval between the first quarter and the full of the moon—say therefore, *nearly, but not quite Full Moon*.

II. Secondly, we will inquire at what time of the day could this address take place?

1. Not in the morning; because the moon was under the horizon, consequently invisible. Not at noon; because she was then only advancing toward the horizon, consequently she continued still invisible. She even continued invisible till the after part of the day, and when the sun was fast declining, and approached toward setting, she would appear above the horizon, and would continue rising in her progress toward the meridian.

2. The position of the moon being ascertained, we are enabled to infer that of the sun; because it being nearly full moon, the sun was nearly in the opposite part of the heavens to her. All these circumstances imply that the time of the day was neither morning, nor noon, but so near to evening that Joshua, fearing he should not have daylight enough, wished for its prolongation.

III. Thirdly, we shall inquire, at what time of the year did this occurrence happen? We *approximate* pretty nearly to it by the following considerations.

Joshua had marched all night (by moonlight on the principles adduced above): it should seem, therefore, that it was not the winter season.

Joshua crossed the Jordan on the 10th of the first month, *say* the fifth day of April. The first passover was held the fifteenth day of the first month, April 10. Allow for the taking of Jericho, of Ai, the ceremonies of Ebal, &c., two months; which brings us to June 10. Any time in June, or early in July, will answer our purpose. It is not to be supposed that the Gibeonites would delay till autumn their league with Israel; but rather that they contrived and executed it directly; and the history shews that the confederate kings attacked them almost immediately. The time, then, was *about* midsummer.

Now it is well known that for some weeks *before* and *after* midsummer, the sun is in his highest northern station; where he seems to continue without variation, so that at this time many days together are of apparently equal length: and, at this time, he never sinks down under the earth low enough to suffer

total darkness, or night, in our own climate : and the same effects follow in proportion to the difference of latitude in the climate of Judea.

At London the longest day is sixteen hours and a half, and the twilight (not night) seven and a half. If we transfer this idea to the latitude of Judea, we shall find that the longest day at Jerusalem is about fifteen hours : to this add a twilight of an hour and a half, which doubled, for evening and morning, makes three hours—in all *eighteen hours of natural light* : so that to maintain the solar light during the remaining six hours would answer the nature and purposes of this miracle. Here we ought to consider—1. that, as the moon was at or near to the full, the lunar light was of considerable brightness in the absence of the sun. And—2. that Joshua did not want for his military operations more light than was necessary to distinguish his enemies from his own troops, and to perceive any body of them at a small distance in their flight. If it be supposed that the moon did not yield light enough for this, it would be nevertheless indifferent to him whether he received his light

from one fixed point of the horizon, or whether the light kept moving on along the horizon to the point where daybreak would naturally begin. Certainly also, it was not necessary that the moon, in order to bestow her light, should be fixed in one identical station during six hours, or even during one hour, the advantage of her light would be exactly the same if she kept on her course; she might, in either case, shine with undiminished lustre into the valley of Ajalon. Rising at five, she would be pretty bright by seven o'clock, very bright at eight, and so would continue till three or four next morning, when the sun-rising would amply supply her place.

Having adverted to the natural annual situation and effect of the sun at midsummer, in the latitude of London, we may now perceive that what was a miracle of protracted light in Judea, would have been a much less or shorter miracle at London, and still less as we advance nearer to the pole.

It is well known that the chief, if not the only objection to this miracle is, that it disturbed the whole progress of nature: if it

stopped the sun in its course it must have made a double day to a whole hemisphere, and a double night to the other hemisphere, with all their attendant effects. If it delayed the moon in her course, it must have made this month, or lunar revolution, longer than any other; must have kept the tides stationary, or have increased them so exceedingly where it was high water, that great inundations must have ensued; while the want of water would have been equally felt where it was low water. I think we have seen reason to conclude that the lunar ORB was not stopped one moment; but kept on her course, yet maintaining her brightest beams on the valley of Ajalon, and the country adjacent, where the enemy were flying.

This statement of the subject answers every objection, respecting the injury done by disturbing the progress of nature; since it shews that, in fact, the progress of nature was neither delayed nor accelerated, but was maintained in its regular proceeding. And this becomes conclusive, if we adopt the idea, that as the moon was not delayed in her course, so neither was

the sun ; but that his light kept moving along the horizon *that night* in Judea, as it now does annually in the Shetland islands, or at Tornea in Lapland ; where the *body* of the sun (*which we have observed is not necessary in this miracle*) is visible at midnight during the solstice.

I beg the reader to suffer the repetition of these reasonings, in order to present the whole at one view, and enforce their conclusion :—

1. The time of the year was *Midsummer* ; because it was after April, and the quantity of business transacted seems proportionate to the quantity of time allowed for it. N.B. Hailstorms are frequent in summer, but rare in winter, especially in the East.

2. It was nearly *Full Moon* ; because then the moon would be visible in the heavens at the close of the day, yet would shine all night till next morning.

3. It was toward the *close of the day* ; because the sun's rays are level only at morning and evening, and the time could not possibly be morning ; also because before the evening time of the day there was no occasion for the desire of prolonged light.

4. If the *light* of the moon was what was wanted, she could dispense that while pursuing her course, so that there was no need for her standing still, in order to shine on any supposed spot, whether Ajalon or elsewhere.

5. If the *light* of the sun was what was wanted, his rays might be so inflected as to enlighten parts much more south than they otherwise would have done; and their motion might have accompanied that of his or along the horizon, consequently there was no need for keeping him standing still, in order to his shining on any particular spot, whether Gibeon or elsewhere.

6. If there was no necessity for the absolute cessation of motion in those heavenly bodies, then the whole progress of nature was not interrupted by this miracle; but, *though miraculous*, it did not extend beyond the limits of this terrestrial globe, nor indeed did it affect any very great proportion of the globe, but only a small part of the northern hemisphere,—namely, from the latitude of Sweden to that of Judea; and that only for a small period of time—viz. during six hours.

“ I have dwelt much on this principle,” conti-

nues the learned writer, from whom this article is borrowed—"because my wish is to insist, in reply to objections which have been taken, that this miracle might take place without any such tremendous causes for alarm and astonishment as some, not very kind friends to revelation, have had the goodness to proclaim."

THE DIAL OF AHAZ.

THE retrogression of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz, as the *sign* that the Lord would heal Hezekiah, agreeable to the promise to add unto his days *fifteen years*, is sometimes referred to as if it were similar to the miracle recorded of Joshua. The Editor of Calmet has a learned Dissertation tending to shew a peculiar significancy in the sign thus granted to Hezekiah. The phenomenon (of however rare occurrence) admits of explanation on principles of science: and its appearance at the time predicted *may* have been the only *really* miraculous part of the transaction. See Calmet, *Fragments*; and also the notes in Hewlett's Bible, 2 Kings xx. 9. and Is. xxxviii. 8.

THE NUMBERS OCCURRING IN THE
HISTORICAL BOOKS.

THE book of Joshua, and the later historical books, contain not a few critical difficulties; of which it has been remarked that, perhaps, two-thirds are found in passages which contain *numbers*. “Of the primitive Hebrew system of notation,” says Milman, “we are most likely ignorant: but the manner in which the numbers are noted in the present copies of the sacred books is peculiarly liable to error and misapprehension.”

But see a long and valuable note on Numb. i. 46. in Hewlett’s Commentary: also a Dissertation in the last edition of Calmet’s Dictionary of the Bible.

THE JUDGES.

WE are now arrived at the period of the Judges.—The confusions and violences of this period, which extended through more than two centuries, were not the result of any aggressive or warlike genius of the Hebrew people. On

the contrary, every thing bespeaks a nation addicted to pastoral and pacific habits. Their alternate oppressions and struggles, though they appear to occupy so much of the history, were relieved by intervals of seven, of forty, and even of eighty years, during which the people 'had rest from their enemies.' The origin of their troubles meets us in the 28th verse of the first chapter. 'When Israel was strong, they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out,' (as they had been commanded to do.) We find them rebuked for this disobedience, (ch. ii.) which it appears from verses 10, 11, 12, and also from the following chapter, had led to idolatrous corruptions. Hence we see the remains of the Canaanitish nations continuing as 'thorns in their sides,' and Israel 'spoiled by their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before them.'

'Nevertheless,' says the historian, 'the Lord raised up Judges, or chiefs, to deliver them, from time to time, when they cried unto Him: (ch. iii. 9.) and (ch. ii. 18.) we read, 'When the Lord raised up Judges, then the Lod was

with the Judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the Judge." These expressions mark plainly that such judges were merely made instrumental to God's mercy to Israel; and they evidently do not imply Divine approbation of their general characters and conduct.

Thus the artifices by which *Ehud* slew *Eglon*, king of Moab, and the treachery of *Jael*, the wife of Heber, when she slew *Sisera*, are mere matter of history.—'Blessed above women shall *Jael* be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent,' sang *Deborah*, the prophetess, in the hymn of victory; but the expression, "above women in the tent," leads us to the sense:—"honour to *Jael* for services above what *women* render in war."

'The Lord is with thee thou mighty man of valour,' said the angel sent to *Gideon*; whose faithful fulfilment of his commission to deliver Israel from the Midianites, is commemorated by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, together with *Barak's faithful* setting out on an expedition that was not to be to his own honour.

The scourging of the elders of *Succoth*, by

Gideon (ch. viii. 16.) seems not necessarily to import that they were put to death, as Milman has stated.

Again, in ch. xi., we read that *Jephthah* was 'a mighty man of valour.' His vow—whether we understand him to have offered up his daughter, or, as seems more probable,* to have consecrated her to the service of God in the tabernacle in a state of celibacy—is no where commanded or approved by God. His address to the king of the children of Ammon, (verse 24) instead of implying, as has been insinuated, an acknowledgment of *Chemosh* as a god, may be best understood as an appeal to those principles of prescription recognised by both nations.

Samson's† history falls in with this view of this portion of the Jewish annals.

* See especially the *Letters of certain Jews to M. Voltaire*, also note in Bagster's Bible, Judges xi.

† In the fifteenth chapter of Judges we read, that Samson, casting away the jawbone, called the place *Ramath-lehi*, or the casting away of the jawbone. That reading of the 19th verse is certainly to be preferred, which relates that God in answer to the prayer of Samson, clave an hollow place in *Lehi*, and there came water thereout: therefore he called the name thereof *Enhakkore*, or the well of him that cried, which is in *Lehi* unto this day.—*Bagster's Bible*.

The confusions of the times are every where strikingly pourtrayed ; and there is doubtless room to apply our sixth preliminary reflection, that many things are recorded in Scripture without sentence of blame, which are not to be *thence* supposed to have been either commanded or approved

On such portions of Jewish history, we are in the habit of exercising less freedom, than seems allowed to us ; due regard being had to the character and object of the writers. Where is the necessity to restrain the expression of our humaner feelings on that barbarous contract, and still more barbarous act of superrogation by which *David* purchased the daughter of Saul with two hundred foreskins of slain Philistines ? Or to take a still more revolting action, when, with the customary brevity of the book of Kings it is recorded, that *Menahem*, the king of Samaria, ‘ smote Tiphseh, and all that were therein ; and the women therein that were with child he ript up ? ’ To pronounce on the concise statements of the annalist, as though we arrogated a thorough knowledge of the circumstances, would be unwarrantable

presumption. To speak tenderly of violence and outrage, as though the truth of God were implicated with the barbarism of His people, in any one stage of their education is surely a most unwise *timidity*.

SAUL AND THE AMALEKITES.

THE story of Saul and the Amalekites stands distinguished by peculiarities, which may perhaps be elucidated.

In the 17th ch. of Exodus, we read, that the children of Israel, after their journeyings, pitched in Rephidim ; ‘and there was no water for the people to drink.’

And in the 8th verse, ‘Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim ;’ and Joshua fought with Amalek, and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill ; and, ‘it came to pass when Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed ;’—‘and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side, until the going down of the sun : and Joshua discomfited

Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.' 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua ; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it *Jehovah-nissi*, for he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.'

In this sense it appears Moses understood the memorial he was commanded to rehearse in the ears of Joshua. The object is to collect, if possible, the *reasons* of this decree of extermination.

It is remarkable that Amalek was not of the Canaanitish nations whose cities the Lord had given to Israel for an inheritance, and who, for their wickedness, were now to be utterly destroyed ; but might rather be supposed included among those 'afar off from Israel,' which were not of the cities of the six nations, and to whom they were directed to offer terms of subjection and tribute, sparing the women and the children. Deut. xx, 13, 14.

The sentence, or prediction, respecting Amalek, was commemorated to that age by the altar built in Rephidim, and the name given to it by Moses. The fame of it would naturally accompany the spreading report of the discomfiture of Amalek's host, and may have been one motive for Balak's holding his people aloof while he sent for Balaam to curse Jacob. The words of Balaam are remarkable. And when he looked on Amalek he took up his parable and said, Amalek was the first of the nations (*understand*, that warred against Israel), but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever!

It seems to the writer that the reasons of this solemn *proscription* are to be found in the anti-social habits of the Amalekites; and a kind of impious contempt evinced by them, of the few conventions which protected the faint and famishing, and were established in a kind of sacredness, from the consciousness of common wants and sufferings. He knows not whether he can convey to the mind of the reader the force of an impression which resides in the vivid imagination of *Arabian* life. In

that age, a few rude laws or customs alone represented the necessity of order and the desire of improvement; and in them were contained, however imperfectly developed, the whole prospects of civilization. The *habitual violation* of them was therefore a turning back the course of society, and causing it to brutify.

Imagine, now, a nation, attacking where there was no water, hanging on the peaceful march, smiting the hindmost, the feeble, and the faint, rushing upon peaceful towns without declaration or notice, ravaging far and wide, destroying the fruits of the earth, and leaving no sustenance for man or beast; and it would seem that a case of *outlawry* is made out, and none would controvert the justice of such a people being 'blotted out from under heaven.' That such was the national character of the Amalekites, prior to the events recorded in Exodus, and down to their final extinction by Saul, appears with great probability from the several passages that make mention of them. We have seen that they *first*, of all the nations, attacked Israel in Rephidim, *where they had no water*: agan, Deut. xxv., the people are

reminded how Amalek *met them by the way*, and smote the *hindmost*, all the *feeble*, behind them, when they were *faint* and *weary*, and *he feared not God*; an expression that seems to mark the general feeling of the impiety of attacks so timed. In the time of the Judges we find them joining themselves as allies, or probably as mercenary and predatory bands, to Eglon, king of Moab, when he smote Israel. A few years later, we read (Judges vi.) that when the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel, and when, because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds. And so it was, *when Israel had sown*, that the Midianites came up, and the *Amalekites*, and the *children of the east*, even they came up against them, and they encamped against them, and *destroyed the increase of the earth* till thou come to Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came up as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into

the land to destroy it. In ch. x. we again find them enumerated among those who had oppressed the chosen people; and near two centuries after we are told, that Saul gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel 'out of the hand of them that SPOILED THEM.' 1 Sam. xiv.

We have traced the Amalekites through four hundred years, to the time of Saul, in whose days, as we have seen, they still *spoiled* Israel. It is in the following chapter that we have the command conveyed by Samuel the prophet to Saul:—'Thus saith the Lord, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.' The Amalekites, in the time of Saul, had filled up the measure of their iniquities; they had adopted, and approved, and acted the deeds of their fathers; and now they are to be swept to destruction. '*I remember* :—God had borne, endured, spared;

but now He will remember! To apply the language of our blessed Lord to the Pharisees, the Amalekites of that generation were witnesses unto themselves that they were *the children of their fathers*, and as the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world, was to be required of that generation which, hearing our Lord's words, persisted still in the spirit of those who killed the prophets; so now, God vindicates the holiness of his judging among the nations, by remembering the wickedness of the fathers in the destruction of their *guilty* posterity. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, 'I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him *when he came up from Egypt*.' The sentence goes back to the commencement of Amalek's *anti-social* outrages on those who were the fore-appointed instruments of God's judgments. 'Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.' The destruction was to be complete, the

remembrance of Amalek was to be '*put out from under heaven.*'

The political or social uses of sparing the Kenites for their ancient kindness, are obvious.

Saul's sparing Agag, together with the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and of the lambs, and all that was good, thus "*flying upon the spoil,*" ver. 19, was a disobedience to the voice of the Lord.

Then came the word of the Lord to Samuel, saying, '*It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king over Israel.*' The attentive reader will observe that, in the 29th verse of this same chapter, Samuel declares to Saul, that 'the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for He is not a man that He should repent.' The writer must be presumed consistent with himself; therefore, when in the 11th, and again in the 35th verse, he tells us that the Lord *repented* that He had set up Saul to be king, we are to regard the expression as an accommodation to human apprehension, and understand that God was then about to take away from Saul the throne to which he had raised him.

The dissimulation of Saul before Samuel, and his praying that Samuel would honour him before the elders and the people, are characteristic.

Then said Samuel, ‘Bring hither to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites: and Agag came unto him *delicately*,’ perhaps *bowing low*. “*Il faisoit le gracieux*,” says Saurin. ‘And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.’ It would destroy the pathos, if we understand this expression as marking only a feeling of *security*.

‘And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces,’ or caused him to be slain, ‘before the Lord.’

If any point, requiring particular notice, has been omitted, it is, perhaps, that *infants* and *sucklings* are included in this decree of extermination. The present writer does not forget that the Author of existence could abundantly compensate and make their removal a blessed change; and that, so far, no more objection would lie against the awful judgment that in-

volved them in their parents' fate, than against any national visitation, an earthquake, or a famine. Great weight seems also to belong to the concluding observations on the wars of Moses, (see page 86.) Yet he will not dissemble, that on this subject he desires further reflection, although the nature of the case may not, perhaps, admit of more satisfaction.

But was this dreadful work of extermination such as amazed and shocked the feelings of that age? How awfully, then, must the unsparing severity of the judgment have taught them the malignity of apostacy! and how *constraining* that *outstretched arm*, that, by its *wondrous works*, could thus make of a people, inclined and tempted to idolatry, the instruments of judgment on the idolatrous nations round about them! Or was extermination of their enemies *common* in the practice of that age? Either supposition furnishes considerations that *reduce* the force of the objections.

In reviewing such early histories we are peculiarly liable to be led away by our humaner feelings; because, in the altered condition of society and of its interests in which we live,

few desire to lessen the influence of such feelings. Most of us know nothing by experience of a state of war as now carried on : but what must have been the horrors of a warfare which, if protracted, kept up the dreadful excitement of the field of battle ; and if successful, led to the breaking up and driving out of the defeated ; dissolved the frail bands that held society together, and left no field or occupation to engage and recompose the remnant of the conquered, and render it *safe for the conqueror to spare them*.

By mighty wonders, the children of Israel were delivered from Egyptian bondage. The Lord brought a vine out of Egypt ; He planted it, and hedged it. The institutions that separated the chosen people contained in them the swelling seeds of *mercy* and *charity*. Destined to expand under the influence of piety and reflection, their ameliorating spirit would have no effect on the fierce struggle *for existence*. To the conqueror there would appear a *necessity* for the extermination of his enemies : for the stern, defensive, customs of the age perpetuated his danger by making the surviving

kindred *avengers of blood*. To have opposed this torrent of passion and necessity by *statute*, without humanizing the heart and mind, would have been of little value; and, *suddenly*, to introduce milder principles, in the collective mind of the Jewish people, would have been impossible, without a miracle, *irresistibly, simultaneously*, and *permanently* controlling the hearts of the whole nation.

The Israelites were to be generally governed by an express law. "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace to it;—and it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee."* And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it, and when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male with the edge of the sword, but the women and little ones, and

* Compare with these the conditions of peace and subjection offered by the Ammonites to the men of Jabesh Gilead. See 1 Sam. xi. 1, 2.

the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee : Thus shalt thou do unto the cities that are *very far off* from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save nothing alive ; but thou shalt utterly destroy them :—namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites ; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, *that they teach you not to do after all their abominations which they have done unto their gods ; so should ye sin against the Lord your God.*"

Read Levit. xviii. and xx. observing verses 24, 25, of the former chapter, and verse 22, of the latter. Can it be matter of wonder, that when the long-suffering of God had waited four hundred years, a people so abandoned should be *utterly* exterminated. But the Israelites were the instruments of this extermination. In that fact is felt the whole

difficulty ; but in that fact also resides the justice and warning mercy of God. See page 116, l. 11. The Israelites were *authorised* executioners : and in this capacity only were forbidden to spare.

Did this awful commission lessen the previous natural horror of an unauthorised shedding of man's blood ? Far from this being inferible, we see the most complete protection thrown round human life ; whether of their own nation, or of the stranger ; and the most sacred barrier interposed against murder or violence, by the solemn claim for the Lord, *of the blood 'which is the life of all that liveth.'*

Some of the foregoing observations may possibly remind the reader of Joshua, ch. vi., where we read that the Israelites 'destroyed all that was in Jericho, both men and women, young and old, ox and sheep and ass.' The *divine command* had in that case solemnly accursed and devoted the city and *all that was therein* ; with a positive command to the Israelites to *keep themselves from the accursed thing*, 'lest ye make yourselves accursed when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse.'

DAVID'S CAPTURE OF RABBAH.

IN the 2d book of Samuel (ch. xii.) we have an account of the capture of Rabbah, by David ; and in the 31st verse we read that David 'brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln ; and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of 'Ammon.' And the parallel passage of Chronicles thus expresses it, "He cut them with saws and with harrows of iron."

The first thing that strikes us is, that much *obscurity* attaches to the narrative in whatever sense we take the expressions just quoted. Nothing of a similar kind appears in the Jewish history, and we are ignorant of any peculiar provocations to justify so unusual severities. Some have thought they might be reprisals for cruelties exercised by the inhabitants of Rabbah ; and it has been remarked, that while the book of Judges relates, that the men of Judah pursued after Adoni-bezek, and

caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes ; it is only *incidentally* that we learn, from the confession of the suffering prince himself, “ threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table ; as I have done so God hath requited me.”

It is important to observe, that for what was here done by David, no divine command is alleged, and no divine approbation recorded. The worst construction therefore would only represent David as making a barbarous use of the rights of conquest.

But the real elucidation of the passage exists in the words of the original.

Josephus, indeed, tells us that the inhabitants of Rabbah were put to death by exquisite torments, and many learned commentators have held the same opinion.

The more favourable interpretation, however, is not entirely derived from the criticism of a humaner age ; but first appears in the Syriac and Arabic versions, which render the passage, ‘ He brought them out and threw them into chains and iron shackles, and made them pass

before him in a proper measure,' or in companies. The Septuagint version reads, 'He put them to the saw, and to iron harrows, and iron instruments, and tools, and made them pass through the bricks.'

The rendering adopted by Dr. S. Chandler, in his *Life of David*, is as follows,—*He brought forth the inhabitants of it, and put them to the saw, to iron mines, and to iron axes, and transported them to the brick-kilns, or rather to the brick-frame and hod, to make and carry bricks.*

The word rendered by our translators, "under," he shews to be in numerous instances rendered "to," or "by," q. d. *put them to saws, &c.* But see his valuable critical elucidation of the original.

This interpretation had induced the writer to suspend his opinion on the text, when he was led to the consideration of a passage, which, together with some others of a similar incidental nature, satisfy him that it is indeed the true sense.

We know that the practice of condemning prisoners of war to laborious or degrading em-

ployments was common. The Egyptian kings condemned their captives to the mines. Joshua, when he spared the lives of the Gibeonites, made them 'hewers of wood and drawers of water.' Samuel, foretelling the oppressions of their king, tells the people that he shall take their sons, and set them 'to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.' Gelo, a prince reputed humane, when he had conquered the Carthaginians in Sicily, divided his captives among his allies, with whom they were 'put in chains, and employed in public works, digging and hewing stone.' But the passage of Scripture, which is most to our point, as fixing these motives and customs to the country and time of David, is in the 13th chap. of 1 Samuel; where we read that, 'there was no smith found in the land of Israel; but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads: so it came to pass in the day of battle

that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan.' It is probable, says an annotator on this passage, that the Philistines had carried away all the smiths from Israel: as Porsenna did in the peace he granted to the Romans, not permitting any iron to be forged except for purposes of agriculture. The same policy was observed by Cyrus in the case of the Lydians; and in 2 Kings xxiv. 14—16, it is recorded that Nebuchadnezzar carried away from Jerusalem all the 'craftsmen and smiths.'

It will be now apparent that nothing was more natural than that David should have spared the lives of his captives, dividing them, and distributing them* to the *saw*, to *iron mines*, and to make *iron axes*, and transporting them to the *brick-frame*;—and that, whatever be the precise meaning of the expressions, they

* It has been mentioned that the parallel passage in Chronicles has the words, "and he cut them with saws and with harrows of iron." The original word signifies, *separated* them, *divided* them, some to the saw, &c. In seven manuscripts collated by Dr. Kennicott, the original word in Chronicles is the same as that in Samuel, rendered "put them."

in reality do not convey the sense that has been attached to them.

We repeat, that in any other view of this passage, it is the character of David *alone* that can suffer; for the genius and design of the Mosaic Institutions evidently contemplated the formation of a people of humane and pastoral habits, secluded and averse from wars of aggression or conquest.

An emphatic evidence of this appears in one remarkable incident: When David, in the decline of a troubled life, proposed to build an house unto 'the Name of the Lord,' the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,—'Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars; thou shalt not build an house unto my Name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold a son shall be born unto thee, and shall be a man of rest—he shall build an house for my Name.' 1 Chron. xxii.

DAVID AND THE GIBEONITES.

THE famine of three years, concerning which David inquired of the Lord, and the answer—*It*

is for *Saul and his bloody house*, because he slew the Gibeonites ;—David's calling the Gibeonites, and requiring them to *name the atonement*, that they might bless the inheritance of the Lord ;—their requisition of seven of the sons of Saul,—and David's delivering them up, and the hanging them up to the Lord in Gibeah ; after which, as we read, ' God was entreated for the land ;'—are all circumstances evidently belonging to a different condition of society, and even to measures of Divine government differing widely from those since established and now deeply rooted in all our notions. But this difference is, in reality, a character of historic truth ;—for we know that the social state of mankind, and especially the government of the Hebrews, were, in that age, widely different from any thing now existing around us. Let us go back nearly three thousand years, and consider the events in their connexion with the *then state and development* of society.

In the time of Joshua the Israelites had been artfully induced to make a league with the Gibeonites for the security of the lives and property of the latter. (See Joshua ix.)

Saul, in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah had, apparently without any provocation, sought to extirpate them from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel.

This notorious violation of the public faith, seems to have been regarded as a thing of no consequence, or rather acquiesced in as a useful and public spirited measure, an act of "*zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.*"

Now consider, that the persuasion that God bore in mind and would long after, when the nation had forgotten its sin, 'make inquisition for blood,' was a tenet of deep importance to the religious creed of the chosen people. The social and political uses of this persuasion, as reinforcing the ordinary motives to the observance of good faith, are too obvious to escape our notice. The 'inquiring of the Lord' was part of that immediate dependance and reference which appear throughout the Jewish history. The answer, '*It is for Saul and for his bloody house,*' recognizes that covenant of temporal providences which we know constituted the sanction of the Theocracy. The *whole nation* seems to have acquiesced in the crime of Saul ;

and would, perhaps, without this visitation, have gone on to complete the extirpation that Saul had attempted. The *bloody house of Saul* is especially mentioned. It may be inferred, with great probability, that it was by the assistance of his sons that Saul had persecuted the unarmed Gibeonites. The calling of the Gibeonites, and the question, What shall I do for you, and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that you may *bless the inheritance of the Lord*? coupled with the answer of the Gibeonites, shews the desire of David by any sacrifice to save the family of Saul, (who yet very probably were accomplices in Saul's sin.) But the incident also shews that David felt himself bound by the right of the Gibeonites as near relatives and *blood avengers*. This right, as we know, carried with it the terrible custom that extended vengeance to the offspring of the murderer. Its general prevalence and acknowledgment seems to prove that it was not ill adapted to the yet rude links of society;—and, notwithstanding the objections to which it is liable, it may be reasonably believed to

have protected more lives than it has immolated to passion or revenge.

The reader, who desires to pursue this subject farther, may turn to the life of David, by Dr. Chandler; who, in reply to those who charge that monarch with devising the whole of the affair as a *pretext* for destroying the *family of Saul*, remarks, that David did not cut off one single person of Saul's family whose death had the least tendency to destroy his name out of his father's house.

DAVID'S NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE.

THE numbering of the people is obscurely narrated in the 24th chap. of the 2d book of Samuel. Whether David's sin consisted in distrust,—or in presumption;—in which probably the people shared, as contemplating unauthorized conquests;—or whether in the impiety of omitting the half shekel that every man, on the numbering of the people, was directed to give as a ransom for his soul, and for the service of the tabernacle; are points concerning which it is not proposed to inquire. It is remarkable

that we hear nothing of the fulfilment of that direction of the law. See Exod. xxx. 13. Perhaps David may have feared that the demanding the tax on his own authority might create a revolt. But the *People* submitted to be numbered, and were therefore bound to pay the tax; for the law did not exempt them from the payment, if he who numbered them did not demand it. They were to pay it as a ransom for *their* lives, and to exempt themselves from the plague. (Exod. xxx. 12.) “And David’s heart smote him after that he had numbered the people, and he said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done, and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done foolishly.” And when the prophet Gad was directed to inquire, “Shall three years of famine come upon thee in thy land, or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, or that there be three days pestilence in thy land.” David said unto Gad, “Let us fall into the hand of the Lord,” and “*the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel.*” Perhaps we should understand the words of David, ‘Lo, I have sinned and done wickedly,

but these sheep, what have they done?’ as simply expressing his contrition and humility.

DAVID’S CHARGE CONCERNING JOAB AND
SHIMEI.—1 KINGS II.

THERE are two constructions of this passage.

The first has the support of the text as it stands,—but then it is inseparable from the following suppositions: namely, that David, or say the Psalmist, (accepting, for the argument’s sake, the imprecations of JUST judgments on his enemies, and the enemies of God, uttered in the trials of his agitated life, and found in the collection of Psalms that bears his name,*)—at the approach of death,

* There is proof of something more than quick contrition and humble acknowledgment of the hand of God in his afflictions, in the answer of David to Abishai’s question—‘Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.’—“What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah; so let him curse, because (q. *according as*) the Lord hath said, Curse David. Who shall say, Wherefore hast thou done so?” And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, “Behold, my son which came forth of my bowels seeketh my life; how much more now may this

reawakened sentiments of revenge, which, in respect of Joab, had hitherto been restrained by a politic fear of that powerful captain; and in Shimei's case, had been restrained, or overcome, in the very moment of provocation, and when the offender was in his power! It supposes David to recite the former crimes of Joab only to furnish the *pretext* for putting him to death; the *real* motive, all the while, being revenge or policy. It supposes him to have referred to his own covenant NOT to put Shimei to death, that he might intimate to Solomon that *he*, being bound by no such compact, *might* take away his life. That his allusion to Shimei commenced by leaving him to the wisdom of Solomon—'Thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him;' and then ended by instructing him to *put him to death*. And, finally, it supposes Solomon, *so understanding the dying injunction of his father*, immediately afterwards to have

Benjamite do it. Let him alone, and let him curse, for (or *as*) the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." 2 Sam. xvi.

sent and put Joab to a judicial death;—and then calling for the *defenceless* Shimei, to have made with him a covenant, by which he bound himself *not* to bring down his hoar head with blood, so long as he should observe the conditions of the covenant; therefore, possibly, nay, even probably, for ever. In other words, that Solomon put it out of his power to fulfil his father's dying instructions; in the hope that, at some after period, Shimei, by a violation of new conditions, *might* forfeit his life.

Surely these suppositions are strained and improbable, and equally at variance with what appears of David's character.

Instead of them, the other construction supposes, an ellipsis of the word '*not*' in the latter part of the charge respecting Shimei.

This is the view taken by Dr. Kennicott. Its advocates refer to several passages in the Hebrew Scriptures, in which the negative particle, occurring in the commencement, is implied, and must be repeated in the latter clause of the sentence; and where our translators have accordingly inserted the word *not* in italics. Such are 1 Sam. ii. 3; Psal. ix. 18;

lxxv. 5; Prov. xxiv. 12, &c. &c. The necessity of this subaudition in the passages referred to was sufficiently evident. The propriety of a like subaudition in the passage we are considering, depended on reflections, which were not likely to occur to translators who partook of the stern temper of their times.

It is further remarked by the advocates of this construction, that it restores a kind of antithesis, or opposition, which may well be supposed to pass across the mind of the dying king: as thus—*He cursed me with a grievous curse, BUT he came down to me, and I swore unto him, &c.* Now, therefore, *hold him not guiltless, BUT his hoar head bring thou (not) down to the grave with blood.*

But the principal support of this interpretation, resides in its accordance with the probable motives and feelings of the dying king; and *still more* in its correspondence with the *sequence of events*; which must be presumed to contain the sense of the words as understood by Solomon himself.

The dying king first impresses on his son, his duty to God; then, surveying the dangers

that encompassed him, he directs him in the choice of his friends, those who "eat at his table." Calling to recollection the still formidable Joab: "Thou knowest," says he, "what Joab did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, Abner and Amasa; how he *shed the blood of war in peace.*" David, as Judge of Israel, had neglected to punish these atrocious murders, and he leaves to Solomon the injunction not to suffer Joab to live in impunity: "Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace."

The sequel informs us that Joab, entangled in Adonijah's cause, fled, and caught hold of the horns of the altar; and Solomon sent, by the hand of Benaiah, and slew him, uttering a joyful exclamation, that "the blood of Abner and Amasa should thenceforth return upon the head of Joab, and of his seed, but *upon David and his seed*, peace for ever from the Lord." Words which discover the reason why Solomon did not spare the life of Joab, to have been his desire to clear the house of his father David from that *responsibility* which the opinion of

the age attached to the omission to avenge murder.

“ But,” continues David, “ shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and *let them be of those that eat at thy table* ; for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. And thou hast with thee *Shimei*, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim ;” (the words taken with the context convey a suspicion of his allegiance.) “ *But* he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore unto him by the Lord, saying, I will *not* put thee to death with the sword. Now, therefore, hold him not guiltless, (for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him,) but his hoar head bring thou (NOT) down to the grave with blood.” Accordingly, we read that Solomon pursued a middle course ; confining Shimei to Jerusalem, but sparing his life by a covenant that Shimei pronounced ‘ good,’ and under protection of which he continued to live for three years at Jerusalem.

True it is, that no moral guilt, nor, in itself, just cause of death, is discernible in his cross-

ing the brook Cedron. Equally true, that the petition of Adonijah for Abishag to wife, contained in itself nothing worthy of death ; but how these acts may have been connected with, and an evidence of, ulterior purposes, we are not informed, and must remain ignorant.*

These arguments in support of the more favourable construction, are not, in the opinion of the writer, destroyed or overcome by a reflection which yet should be considered ; namely, that it supposes Solomon, *at a later period*, to put Shimei *to death*, when (so far as we can see) he might have spared him.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

THE Song of Solomon has been a subject of much embarrassment to the Christian reader. Many are not easily persuaded that this writing can have any religious reference ; and it is confessedly difficult to make it appear to general satisfaction.

We say nothing, for the present, of the *taste*

* The harem was part of the royal succession.

of this composition, nor of the acknowledged beauty of its expression. Its place in the sacred volume is undoubtedly a presumption of considerable weight in favour of its *religious* reference; and this acquires additional force from the circumstances.

The reign of Solomon was distinguished, next to its great prosperity, by an extended intercourse with eastern nations. This would naturally lead to some assimilation in *habits* and *customs*: witness the pomp of the harem, the stalled horses of Solomon, &c. Perhaps also in *literature*; for we are told, that “the wisdom of Solomon excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east;” doubtless in things wherein they could be compared. It was the well-known practice of eastern sages to collect maxims pregnant with wisdom and experience: and we learn from the historian of the book of Kings, that “Solomon spake three thousand proverbs, and his *Songs* were one thousand and five.” Doubtless these last excelled in the customary ornaments of eastern poetry—bold imagery and hyperbole. But why, of all the Songs of Solomon, was the *Song of Songs* alone

admitted to the collection of inspired writings? Can any conjecture be more probable, than that it was because, from the beginning, it was understood to carry a concealed religious reference. The received *opinion*, for it can hardly be deemed an *interpretation*, leads us somewhat further, but with less assured steps. The Jews were very early accustomed to parables exhibiting Jehovah as the *Spouse* of their nation, and every departure from him, or admission of other influence, as an act of *adultery*. (See Numb. xiv. 33; Psal. xlv. &c.) The 16th chap. of Ezekiel is an instance of the extent to which this comparison was pursued. The Prophet not only adopts the image, but goes, as it were, out of his way, to seek expressions which may *degrade*, while they smite the sin of apostacy. A *nation* to which the language of Ezekiel was appropriate and intelligible, might probably contain *individuals*, who, meditating on this poem, might discern in it allusion to the *religious life of the soul*, or to the church of the Saints of old, *inquiring* and *longing* for the appearance of its heavenly King.

The principal difficulty consists in this ana-

logy's appearing, at first view, but *faint** and *general*; and being throughout broken by dialogues and digressions, full of elaborate poetic ornament, for which we perceive no religious application.

But we are to bear in mind that the genius of eastern poetry was satisfied with a very slight analogy in the leading image, just sufficient for general acceptance; launching out thence into discursive flights, wherein the chief figure was often forgotten in the pursuit of the subordinate similes: the license of composition allowing of any departure from the unity of the subject for the sake of the indulgence of the imagination. So that, if the leading reference offered sufficient analogy to rest in the mind, the strange assortment of the adjunct images would neither disprove the intention of such reference, nor prevent its separation in the mind of the hearer from the ornaments of poetic imagination which hung loosely connected with it.

* The reader may, however, consult Discourses upon Solomon's Song by W. Romaine, M.A. See also a spiritual interpretation and paraphrase of the entire Poem, attempted in Brown's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. ii.

This view supposes Solomon to have adopted, as a *shadow* of the relation between the Lord, and those who lived on his promises, that connection of human life which is the most intimate and lasting ;—full of *love*, *dependance*, and *worship*, on the one side ;—and of watchful *sympathy*, superintendence, and *protection*, on the other.

The *precise* design of this short book is, however, a point still open to conjecture ; and one which may hereafter receive important elucidation.

The alleged *licentiousness* of the ideas comes next to be considered. And here it is obvious, that the propriety or indelicacy of language is referrible to a *varying* and always *arbitrary* standard. In some countries, custom, we know, goes very far to divest particular associations of their natural effect on the imagination ; while, in others, imagination has connected singular effects with ideas and actions that are elsewhere of gold and common-place occurrence. Solomon's Song is equally, with all other writings, entitled to be judged with reference to the opinion of the age of its com-

position ; and, above all, to the peculiar style of *ornate lyric* in which it is composed.*

It may add to the reader's satisfaction to consider, that the custom of the Jews did not encourage the indiscriminate perusal of the sacred books ; and the ancient Hebrews advised young men to forbear the reading of this book *in particular* until they were thirty years old.

The foregoing remarks are submitted with a strong sense of the difficulty of the subject, in the persuasion that they are entitled to attention.

It is a great mistake to suppose the Christian prevented approaching questions of this nature

* Sir W. Jones has left a short *Essay on the Mystical poetry of the Persians and Hindus*, (see Vol. iv. p. 211, 8vo.) accompanied by specimens of this kind of emblematic theology, which may satisfy every one of the *comparative* restrained propriety of expression of the Song of Songs. Some passages of Barrow, quoted by Sir W. Jones, pp. 213—216, are exceedingly appropriate for their illustrating the natural utterance of warm devotion in the language of human passion ; and equally so for a kind of enforced and abrupt *repression* of images occurring to the writer, but uncongenial with the method and coldness of modern composition.

with the most perfect freedom. The true idea of freedom includes, however, *the just influence of all reasonable considerations*; and of this kind is the reflection that, if we assume the truth of Revelation, it is reasonable to think its Author would preserve a clearly defined, or at least discoverable, separation between inspired writings and others of mere human origin. The Books of the Old Testament were, we know, very early distinguished from those composing what is called the Apocrypha; but the *Song of Songs* appears to have been never questioned, until somewhat presumptuously judged by the taste of a distant and different age.

THE DISOBEDIENT PROPHET.

I KINGS XII. and XIII.

JEROBOAM, fearing that the people if they went up to do sacrifice at Jerusalem, might be induced to turn unto Rehoboam, the king of Judah, made two calves of gold, and set one in Bethel, and the other in Dan, and seems to have sought to engraft the worship of these

idols on the historical recollections of Israel; saying, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of Egypt." With this same purpose probably, he ordained, 'in his own times,' 'feasts like unto the feasts that are in Judah,' and himself offered on the altar. The historian continues, 'so did he in *Bethel*, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made; and he placed in Bethel the *priests* of the high places which he had made.' In the previous verse we read, that he 'made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.'

The schism of Jeroboam would be the object of abhorrence to every true worshipper; but the attempt to associate with the worship of idols, a priesthood, and feasts after the manner of those in Judah, must have seemed to call for *Divine interposition*, and ought to have made the servants of the true God scrupulously avoid any approach to the place where their religion was thus daringly profaned. But now, "there came a man of God out of Judah, by the word of the Lord, unto *Bethel*, and cried against the altar, in the word of the Lord." Jeroboam was

standing by the altar to burn incense, and put forth his hand, saying, 'Lay hold on him;' and his hand dried up so that he could not pull it in again. At the king's prayer the man of God besought the Lord, and his hand was restored. And the king said unto the man of God, 'Come home with me and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.' 'And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread, nor drink water *in this place*; for so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.' So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.

Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel.

Here we are led to inquire what is meant by the expression '*prophets*'—'*sons of the prophets*'—'*company of prophets*,' occurring in this portion of the history.

In the want of precise information, it may be conjectured, that the occasional appearance of 'men of God,' certified by miracles as sent of God, had led to the establishment of colleges,

in which a succession of persons, called 'sons of the prophets,' as *seeking their spirit*, were trained to the office of praising God, vocally, or with instruments of music. If this be acknowledged as the most probable opinion, it will appear likely that Jeroboam, who seems to have affected some resemblance of the true worship, should also form *his* companies of prophets : the name implying not so much any actual or present pretension to inspiration, as the waiting in the way of God's Spirit.

The reader will turn to the 13th chap. of 1 Kings, which records the judgment on the man of God's disobedience. It is conceived that objections to the justice of this judgment would be sufficiently met by shewing that we are not in possession of all the circumstances ; but, in reality, enough appears from the history itself.

It was at *Bethel* that Jeroboam set up his *golden calves* ; and we are told that 'every one who came to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, might be a priest to them who were no gods.' From the book of Chronicles, we find that the Levites had been

cast out from executing their office, and had left their suburbs and possessions ; and such of all the tribes as *set their hearts to seek the God of Israel*, came to Jerusalem to worship. 2 Chron. xi.

At this scene of idolatry, however, we find the old prophet dwelling with his sons. It is, therefore, at least a probable conclusion, that the old prophet had compromised his integrity by adulterating his religion with idolatrous compliances : *he* was not driven out ; he *dwelt with his sons at Bethel*.

If we now place ourselves in the situation of the man of God, we perceive that his compliance and turning back with the prophet, in disobedience to the charge given to him, was a practical admission, that the old prophet of Bethel was, as he pretended, a prophet *as he was*. It implied the acknowledgment that God would honour as the medium of Divine direction, one who, without any known compulsion of duty, dwelt in the very seat of idolatrous worship ; and it practically *took off* the interdict and excommunication which the man of God had just pronounced.

Add to this, what has been elsewhere remarked, that ancient *hospitality* was inseparable from the superstitions of the hearth; and we have a fuller view of that turning back from the commandment which drew down his awful fate.

The prophet who brought him back may have had no insidious purpose, beyond the desire to learn more touching the prophecy against the altar of *Bethel*. For this '*he lied unto him*' to induce him to return.

There seems a kind of retributive propriety in the word of the Lord suddenly overruling the prophet, whose inspiration the man of God had unfaithfully admitted, and causing *him* to utter the judgment denounced against the disobedient man of God. The grief of the old prophet appears to have been quite unaffected; and the direction to lay his bones when he died in the sepulchre of the man of God, besides being agreeable to the general reverence attached to the prophetic office by eastern nations, may have had reference to the terms of the prophecy, that the priests of the high places should afterwards be offered up on the altar of Bethel, and '*men's bones be burnt thereon;*'

see the 23d chap. of the 2d book of Kings, where we read that Josiah, when, in the eyes of Israel, he polluted the altar at Bethel with men's bones, respected the sepulchre of the man of God, *and of the prophet that came out of Samaria.*

The old prophet's exclamation—"The word that the man of God spake shall surely come to pass," may be taken to indicate a measure of faith and turning to God. It would seem a probable consequence, that the old prophet should afterwards *come out* from this scene of idolatry and profanation; and perhaps the expression of the writer of the 2d book of Kings, *the prophet that came out of Samaria* (which has led some to suppose that he was originally of Samaria and came thence to Bethel,) may be admitted in confirmation of this conjecture; Samaria being taken as the "*sin of Samaria.*" See Amos viii. 14. See also 2 Kings xxi. 13.

ELISHA.

THIS peculiar notoriety of *Bethel* as a seat of idolatry and profanation may assist us to the

explanation of the passage in the 2 Kings ii. The words translated "little children," are explained to admit of the sense of "young men." A disorderly rout of young men strolling out of the city, perhaps to compel strangers to 'go up' and worship the idol, meet Elisha, and mock him, saying, 'Go up thou bald head,' an expression commonly, but perhaps erroneously, thought to contain an allusion to the recent translation of Elijah.

And there came two she bears, &c. ver. 24. In those days of rebellion and misgovernment, the wild beasts seem to have been suffered to multiply and become formidable. Hence, at this period, we find them made the instruments of God's judgments.

ON THE HISTORY OF AHAB, &c.

How long halt ye between two opinions? said Elijah to the people, when the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of the groves were assembled on Carmel.

It may be inferred, that there had been no formal and express abolition of the worship of

Jehovah ; but a wicked allowance and encouragement of such as followed Baalim : in short, that opinions were divided. The same appears from the 22d chap. of 1 Kings. Jezebel had, indeed, cut off the prophets of the Lord (chap. xviii.) and Elijah himself was some time after a fugitive. We, however, find the people taking part with him in slaying the prophets of Baal, after their signal confutation, recorded in the same chapter.

If we take this view of the state of religious opinions at the time, we shall more readily perceive that the covenant by which Ahab, king of Israel, spared Benhadad, king of Syria, calling him ‘ Brother,’ and entering into alliance with him, tended, by strengthening the interests of idolatry in Israel, to bring about a *national departure from Jehovah*: a sin more flagrantly opposed to the Mosaic institution than even the adulterous mixture of idolatrous and superstitious rites.

Hence followed that remarkable incident recorded in the 20th chap. of 1 Kings, where we read, that “ a certain man of the sons of the prophets,” disguising himself with wounds, and

putting ashes on his head, placed himself in the way of Ahab, and by a fictitious tale, drew from the king a sentence on a sin analogous to the disobedience of the king himself; and then hastily pronounced a Divine judgment upon Ahab.

It is observable, also, that this certain man of the sons of the prophets, in order that he might appear to have taken part in the battle, agreeable to the tale he told, 'said unto his neighbour, *in the word of the Lord*—' smite me ;' and the man refused to smite him; and he said unto him, " Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee : " and as soon as he was departed a lion found him and slew him.'

The passage reminds us of the fate of the disobedient man of God.

We are ignorant of the meaning of the expression, "*in the word of the Lord*," as well as how it was made intelligible, that the refusal to smite was a disobedience to the '*voice of the Lord*;' but then our ignorance itself is a point of considerable importance to establish when

we are treating of objections to ancient history.

The *dignus vindice nodus*, will, by Christians, be acknowledged in occasions which others may probably consider far too private or obscure to call for Divine intervention :—as where a distinguished servant of God was to be evidenced to others,—or roused and strengthened to the faithful discharge of an arduous duty ; that duty, perhaps, being only to bear un-availing witness against the wickedness of his age.

The mantle of Elijah, that divided the stream of the Jordan, 2 Kings ii. 14., and some other displays of Divine power recorded in the book of Kings, may render it desirable that the reader should give its due weight to this remark.

JONAH.

THE reality of the events recorded in the book of Jonah, and, above all, of the miracu-

lous preservation of Jonah in the belly of a whale or great fish, is established by the terms of our Lord's reference ; or at least it is not easy to conceive a reference carrying a more implicit attestation. "The men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonas;" and again, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

What then shall we say,—not to the profane ridicule of infidels,—but to Christians, who have the misfortune to approach this subject under the influence,—in this age so difficult to exclude,—of an irrational scepticism?

Let it be observed, that we do not ask men, on the strength of this history, to believe in the authority and inspiration of the Bible ;—but, being ready to give a reason for our faith in these, we call for the confession of the *Hand of God* ; and whatever difficulties embarrass weak believers, flee before the thought that that *Hand* can order as He pleases.

Due regard being had to this principle, without which there can be no steadiness in

our inquiries, we may consider whether the narrative affords any clue to the reason for this particular miracle. Perhaps Jonah's arising to flee from the presence of the Lord unto Joppa, and thence to Tarshish, may warrant the suspicion that he thought to place himself beyond the power of the Lord. In the *darkened philosophy* and *superstition* of early ages, we learn the character of the delusions that *then* waylaid the failing faith of the true worshippers. It was the doctrine of the Magi, that the several parts of Creation were all animated by different gods, of powers proportioned to the element they moved.* A guilty fear disposes the heart to seek to refuges of lies; and he who could think to flee to *Joppa*, might look upon the *Sea* beyond as bounding the providence, or even the power of Jehovah. When Jonah saw himself pursued by the tempest, and that the lot fell upon him, he appears

* They allowed *fire* and *water* to be the only proper emblems or representations of their gods. They believed in two self-existent principles, a *Good* and an *Evil*; but if Diogenes Laertius is to be credited, they held that fire, earth, and *water*, which they called *gods*, were generated of these two.

to recover the firmness of his mind in the confession of his sin ; acknowledging the Lord as the ‘ God of Heaven, who made the *Sea* and the *Dry Land*,’ and desiring the mariners to cast him into that raging element, in which he now beheld only the arm of God.

The *Sea* and the *Whale* seem to have been early regarded as symbols of ungovernable power. Thus Job exclaims, ‘ Am I a sea or a whale that Thou settest a watch over me.’ The choice of them as the instruments of the judgment and deliverance of Jonah, was, therefore, visibly the fittest,—because the strongest that could have been directed against the peculiar superstition that has been adverted to.

The event occurred, and the instruction it conveyed was exhibited in the eyes of a *remote age*.*

In after times, the history acquired a solemn

* Dr. Gray observes, that the fame of Jonah’s deliverance appears to have spread among the heathen nations; and the Greeks, who were accustomed to adorn the memory of their heroes by every remarkable event and embellishment which they could appropriate, afterwards added to the fictitious adventures of Hercules, that of having continued *three days*, without injury, in the belly of a dog sent against him by *Neptune*.

interest, from its being the appropriated type of His *resurrection* who 'cast our sins into the depths of the sea.'

The sequel of the history reminds us of the veneration anciently paid to such as were supposed to be honoured by the divine *afflatûs*. The chosen people, at this period, may be supposed to have been the objects of a wide-spread religious awe.

The gourd that came up in a night, is literally the '*son of the night*,'—that is, grew rapidly in the night. The extraordinary quick growth of similar plants is noticed by travellers.

CHRONICLES.—EZRA.

THE author of the Age of Reason has dwelt much on the circumstance of the first two verses of the book of Ezra being also appended at the end of the 2nd of Chronicles. That writer adduces this circumstance as an instance of the *slovenly manner* in which the Scriptures have been put together; and founds on it an argument against their authenticity. Bishop Watson has passed over this objection;

which yet appears to merit a moment's attention.

It is remarkable that no precisely similar instance of repetition occurs in the sacred volume. Let us, consider, therefore, if any *peculiarity* of circumstances will account for the fact.

Now, it is agreed that Ezra collected all the books of which the sacred Scriptures then consisted, disposed them in their proper order, and, in short, settled the canon of Scripture for his time. It is probable that he also added chapters at the end of certain books to carry on and connect the narrative.

This settlement of the canon may be reasonably supposed to have excluded some writings then existing, of which the inspiration was doubtful or disallowed. What then could be better adapted to denote their *exclusion* than the appending to the last book of the canon, as *then closed*, a few words forming *the introduction to the book of Ezra himself*, which was designed to follow: those words, in fact, referring to a period seventy years later than the verse immediately preceding?

EZRA.

MANY, arguing from the acknowledged part taken by Ezra in this settlement of the canon, have gone the length of ascribing to him the entire frame and authorship of the books themselves. The following remarks of Milman expose the groundlessness of this supposition :—

“Who but MOSES ever possessed such authority as to enforce submission to statutes so severe and uncompromising? Yet, as Moses incontestably died before the conquest of Canaan, his legislation *must* have taken place in the desert. To what *other* period can the Hebrew constitution be assigned? To that of the Judges? a time of anarchy, warfare, or servitude. To that of the Kings? when the republic had undergone a total change. To any time after Jerusalem became the metropolis? when the holy city, the pride and glory of the nation, is not even alluded to in the whole law. After the building of the temple? when it is equally silent as to any settled or durable edifice. After the separation of the kingdoms? when the close bond of brother-

hood had given place to implacable hostility. Under Hilkiab? Under Ezra? when a great number of the statutes had become a dead letter.—Again, the law depended on a strict and equitable *partition of the land*. At a later period it could not have been put into practice without the forcible resumption of every individual property by the state. The difficulty, or rather impossibility, of such a measure, may be estimated by any one who is not entirely unacquainted with the history of the ancient Republics.—In other respects, the Law *breathes the air of the Desert*. Enactments intended for a people with settled habitations and dwelling in cities, are mixed up with temporary regulations only suited to the encampment of a Nomad tribe. There can be no doubt that the statute-book of Moses, with all its particular enactments, still exists; and that it recites them in the order, if it may be called order, in which they were first promulgated.”

To the foregoing remarks we may add one general observation, with respect to the other books of the Old Testament. If we admit that

we have no such certain or precise information as to the authors of *several* of those books, as to preclude all question on those points ;* the evidence of the *Facts* would in no way suffer from such an admission. For the credibility of the events recorded in the historical books does not, as some would have us believe, reside in the ascription of this or that book to this or that writer, (on which points an uniform tradition is all that can be reasonably expected,)—but in the *adoption* of the accounts themselves by the general body of the Jewish nation ; who certainly had both a deeper interest, and far better means for discriminating between true and false accounts, than we, at this distance of time, can possibly possess.

* The history and claims of these books seem to be very fairly epitomized in the several Introductions prefixed to them, in most of our Bibles with notes. The additions made to some of these books by later hands, and the misarrangement of chapters, are circumstances that should be borne in mind, and may be of assistance in elucidating the history.

GENEALOGY OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

ONE important difficulty, respecting the different genealogies of our Lord as given by Matthew and Luke, is removed by supposing that the former gives Joseph's pedigree, and the latter Mary's; for the words of St. Luke iii. 23, when properly rendered and pointed, are—' And Jesus was about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed the son of Joseph) the son of Heli.' He was the son of Joseph by *common report*, but in reality the son of Heli, by his mother *Mary*, who was Heli's daughter.

The Jews never permitted the name of a *woman* to enter their genealogical tables; but inserted her husband as the son of him, who was in reality but his father-in-law.

On the other hand, that Matthew has deduced our Lord's pedigree, by enumerating the ancestors of Joseph, who was not his real father, may be accounted for by the supposition, that he intended to remove the scruples of those who knew that the Messiah was to be the *heir of David's crown*. Now, though Joseph was

not Christ's real father, yet it was for the evangelist's purpose to derive his (*Joseph's*) pedigree from David, and to shew that Joseph was the eldest surviving branch of the posterity of that Prince ; because, this point being established, it was well enough understood, that Joseph, by marrying our Lord's mother after he knew that she was with child, adopted the child as his son, and raised him to the dignity and privileges of David's heir.*

* The hypothesis of Hartley deserves mention. He *supposes* MATTHEW to give the real progenitors of Joseph, and LUKE to give the series of those who were heirs to David by birth-right. Where the family of him who had the birth-right became extinct, Luke would return to the line of the lineal descendants. Thus, MATTHEW would follow the descendants of Solomon, down to Salathiel,—and LUKE the descendants of Nathan ; until the family of Nathan being *perhaps* extinct, he too would take Salathiel the *lineal* descendant. The son of Salathiel was *Zorobabel*, and here again the two genealogies diverge.—MATTHEW taking Abiud, the real progenitor of Joseph, and Luke passing to Rhesa, the eldest son of Zorobabel ;—and thus, Matthew would proceed by lineal descent to Joseph ; and Luke by heirs to Heli, who may be *supposed* to have died without heirs male ; in which case Luke, conformably to his purpose, would take JOSEPH as heir to the birth-right.

The list of names in both genealogies as recorded by Matthew and Luke (says Willan) has been given incorrectly by *early transcribers*. Luke's genealogical table was also set incorrectly by the original *printers* of the Greek Testament. This appears from the various readings in ancient manuscripts yet remaining; which exhibit several transpositions of names;—confound similar names, as Jonan, Janna, Joanna, Joram, Joseph, Jose, but especially Matthat, Matthan, Mattathā, Mattathias, Maath, Ma-tha;—and repeat many times particular names, and even considerable portions of the list.

This last particular is important, as tending to account for the greater number of generations appearing in Luke, from David to Jesus; which are to those stated in Matthew as forty-one to twenty-six.

In the eighth verse of St. Matthew, after Ozias, Bishop Newcome and other commentators would insert the names of Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, on the authority of 1 Chron. iii. 11—12; but others are of opinion, that they were purposely omitted by the framers of the original genealogical tables of the Jews, which

it is probable the evangelists transcribed, on account of the *curse* that was denounced against the house of Ahab. 1 Kings xxi. 21., and 2 Kings ix. 8. In consequence of this curse their names perhaps were blotted out of the annals of their race, and they themselves neglected or forgotten.—Consult Hewlett's Notes.

Now it is not so material to shew the correctness of this, or any other conjecture, as it is desirable that the reader should see that motives of which we are imperfectly informed,—and such motives unquestionably did operate on the minds of the Jews,—may have led to the seeming discrepancies.

It does not appear that the Jews of the first century objected to the genealogies.

“C'etoit une habitude bien constaté des Juifs, de supprimer souvent quelques uns des chainons de leur genealogies, en presentant le petit fils comme immediatement né de l'aieul. Il paroît qu'ils faisoient cela quand le pere avoit vecu peu de tems, ou bien avoit joué dans l'histoire un role moins remarquable; peutetre meme pour donner aux genealogies quelque chose de

plus symmetrique et de plus regulier. Pour eux la *certitude* de l'origine etoit tout, et les intermediaires peu de chose."—CELLERIER.

An objector who assigns fraudulent collusion to account for the substantial agreement of the several Gospels, should ask himself what can have occasioned this seeming disagreement at the outset, unless it be that *circumstantial variety*, which so often attends substantial agreement in the truth of FACTS. On the other hand, he who is content to uphold this seeming discrepancy, as the mark of careless and slovenly writers, may be recommended to weigh well the worth of the substantial agreement of witnesses, too negligent for artful collusion.

MASSACRE OF THE CHILDREN IN BETHLEHEM.

THE slaughter of the children by Herod, has been thought less credible because not noticed by Josephus. Lardner has, however, shewn that the number of children so massacred did not, *probably*, exceed twenty. It would be easy to instance omissions of much greater magnitude in every known historian.

THE TEMPTATION.

It would be going beyond the objects of this work to attempt any particular reply to the objections that have been urged against the Scripture account of the Temptation of our Lord. It is enough to remark, that a man would not cease to be a Christian if he should regard the whole of this trial as acted in vision. The temptation might be real, if the circumstances of the event were not so.

Hewlett's Commentary may be referred to.

NEW TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS FROM THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

THE quotations by the New Testament writers of passages from the Old Testament, present peculiar critical difficulties. A useful classification of them may be seen in the 2d vol. of Horne's *Introd. to the Scriptures*.

The portion of the subject that comes within the objects of this work, consists in many passages being quoted in the New Testament as

prophetic of the events therein recorded, which yet seem to have no reference to such events.

Consider, first, that the Sacred Books were the classics of the Jews. They were in every one's hands, and nothing could be more natural than the adoption of the language of those books, in treating of any religious subject; and the practice in fact appears to have been familiar, and in general use, even on more ordinary occasions. The reader may think it unlikely that such accommodations of the language of the Sacred Writings should be introduced by the words, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet." On that point, however, the authority of the Talmud and the Rabbinical writers is complete and decisive: and they abound with similar instances; great numbers of which are cited by Surenhusius. It was apparently a practice quite familiar to that people to use such expressions, without in the least intending to convey that the prophet had any view to such an application of his words.

While on this subject we may observe, that in passages where the prophetic reference de-

serves to be more undoubted, we are yet often surprised by an abrupt transition to objects either contemporary or more nearly relating to the age of the writer. Hence some have thought it probable that the ancient prophets had only a vivid and confused contemplation of the future; *simultaneous*, and therefore *indistinct*,—as the landscape to the traveller, or the starry heavens to the shepherd. Some of the peculiar forms of *drama* or *dialogue*, occurring in their writings, may be connected with this fact; and hence the prophets may have been led to intermingle allusions to analogous but different and distant events; because they were struck by their resemblance to each other, though unable to judge of the distance between them. We are told by St. Peter, that “the Prophets inquired and searched diligently, what or what *manner of time* the spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.”

THE CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF
CHRIST.

THE best solution of the apparent discrepancy in the hours mentioned by St. Mark xv. 25, and St. John xix. 14, may probably be that which is contained in the following annotation of Elsley.

The Jews divided the day from sun-rise to sun-set into four portions, by the Hebrew hours of sacrifice and prayer: these were, reckoning the hours from sun-rise, the third or our nine in the morning; the sixth or our noon; and the ninth or our three in the afternoon; as Jerome on Dan. vii.—thus, Matt. xx. 3, 5. On the feast days these were distinguished by the sound of trumpet, Numb. x. 10—thus, Acts iii. 1. x. 3, 9. So Tertullian (*de jejuniis*) distinguishes these hours as the most noted divisions of time: “*quæ diem distribuunt, quæ negotia distinguunt, quæ publice resonant:*” and hence the canonical hours of the Romanists. Whatever happened between these stated hours of prayer, was referred sometimes to the preceding, sometimes to the concluding hour. When St. Mark

says, "It was the third hour," or the trumpet of the third hour had sounded; that expression serves for any time till the trumpet of the sixth hour sounds. Christ being placed upon the cross therefore towards noon, or about eleven in the morning, the time is set forth with sufficient consistency: in St. Mark, intimated to be in the portion after the third hour; in St. John, by his being condemned and crucified 'about' or previous to the sixth hour.

If this should be admitted as a solution of the discrepancy,—and the present writer is inclined to think it satisfactory,—there can be no need of calling to our aid the various reading of some early MSS., of $\tau\pi\epsilon\tau\eta$ instead of $\epsilon\kappa\tau\eta$ in the passage of St. John, which reading is considered by Griesbach as equal, or perhaps preferable to the received reading.

Very probable, says Bloomfield (*Crit. Digest.*) on this passage, is the conjecture that the letter τ ($\tau\pi\epsilon\tau\eta$) has been changed into ϵ ($\epsilon\kappa\tau\eta$); as is not unfrequent.

See, however, apparently very considerable objections to this view in Elsley's Annotations.

We may remark, that *either* the proposed emendation is the *original* and *true reading*; in which case *no discrepancy exists between St. Mark and St. John*. Or else, some early transcriber has adopted *ῥῑση* into the text of St. John as the true reading, perhaps on the mere strength of a probability, arising from its seeming necessary to the harmony of the two accounts.

If this *latter* opinion should be thought most probable, it will lead us to the following important reflection.

Celsus, who flourished and wrote about A. D. 150, is known to have objected the seeming discrepant circumstances of the resurrection. A few years after his time, Tatian composed a harmony or collation of the four Gospels. Julius Africanus, about A. D. 230, wrote an epistle on the apparent differences in the genealogies in Matthew and Luke. Dionysius of Alexandria, who lived in the same century, has the following sensible reflection: "Let us not think that the Evangelists disagree or contradict each other, although there be some small difference; but let us honestly

and faithfully endeavour to reconcile what we read." In the following century, Gregory of Nyssen proposed a method to *reconcile* the several accounts of the Resurrection.

Most of these writers lived long prior to the establishment of Christianity as the dominant religion of the state,—before any of the general councils,—and long before that period of comparative darkness and confusion in which the power of the church was least disputed.

Yet we see that the Scriptures have emerged from ages of darkness and confusion, with the identical *prima-facie* discrepancies which Celsus alleged, and the early Christians laboured to explain.

The inference is inevitable :—There has been no *material*,—because no at once *intentional and extensive* adulteration of the Holy Scriptures ; it not being to be doubted that one object of tampering with these writings would have been to remove from the face of them any single words that had been a source of embarrassment, or had furnished ground of plausible objection.

THE RESURRECTION.

THE events related by the Evangelists as occurring in the morning of our Lord's resurrection, present at first view great difficulties. Some have very hastily concluded, that it was not possible to bring out the facts related, so as to shew the several statements to be consistent with each other. This, therefore, will be our present object.

The Author of the Age of Reason, when he supposes the Evangelists to come into 'a court of justice' to give evidence, betrays the kind of justice he would award, by proposing to dismiss them as '*perjurers*,' because they give their evidence in a '*contradictory manner*.' Now, surely they who sit in judgment, would act more reasonably in endeavouring to discern whether there really be any *contradiction* under this *diversity of manner*.

'I know not,' says Paley, 'a more rash or unphilosophical conduct of the understanding, than to reject the substance of a story by reason of some diversity in the circumstances with which it is related. The usual character of

human testimony is substantial truth, under circumstantial variety. This is what the daily experience of courts of justice teaches. When accounts of a transaction come from the mouths of several witnesses, it is seldom that it is not possible to pick out apparent or real inconsistencies between them. These inconsistencies are studiously displayed by an *adverse* pleader, but sometimes with little impression upon the minds of the judges.'

That in this instance the inconsistencies are merely on the surface, will be apparent, if we will only take the trouble to understand the witnesses. Whoever attends to them will discern that they nowhere undertake to tell the whole facts; but simply report so much of the occurrences as are suited to their immediate purposes, which may be supposed to differ according to the time and circumstances of the writers.

Paley thought ' the design of Matthew was to attest the fulfilment of our Lord's promise to go before the disciples into Galilee; for Matthew alone,—except Mark, who seems to have taken it from him,—records the promise, and he alone has confined his narrative to that single appear-

ance which fulfilled it.* But that there is nothing in St. Matthew's language which negatives other appearances, is made pretty evident by Mark's Gospel, which uses the same terms concerning the promise to go before them into Galilee, '*there shall ye see him*;'—and yet records two other appearances, which, by comparing the order of events, are shewn to have been *prior* to the appearance in Galilee.'

If we take St. Luke, we learn from him, that when the two disciples rose up and came from

* It was the preconcerted and most public manifestation of our Lord's person. Perhaps the previous announcement led thither more than five hundred brethren. (1 Cor. xv.)

In like manner we may observe, that St. John alone has recorded our Lord's appearance to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias, probably, because in his time the *death of Peter* had attached additional interest to the prediction of our Lord concerning it; which prediction was uttered on that occasion.

It was an occasion to which St. John would naturally often recur on other accounts. (See ch. xxi. 21—24.) He lived to see the coming of the Son of Man, in the sense in which it was promised by our Lord: 'Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel before the Son of Man come.' And again: 'There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'—'Then shall ye see the sign of the Son of Man,' &c.

Emmaus to Jerusalem, they found the eleven gathered together, saying, ‘ *the Lord is risen, and hath appeared unto Simon :*’ an incident referred to by the apostle Paul, (1 Cor. xv. 5.) but no where narrated by St. Luke himself.

Lastly, if we take St. John, he interrupts the course of his narration, to tell us, ‘ *many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book ;*’ and he concludes his narrative with a hyperbolical exclamation to the same effect.

It is clear, therefore, the writers did neither intend a *complete* history, nor, indeed, any strict observance of the *order* of the several occurrences.

Now, unless witnesses are to be dismissed as *perjurers* upon the first appearance of inconsistency, some hypothesis must be tried to reconcile their several accounts. The common sense of mankind does this *instinctively* in all occasions of *prima-facie* inconsistency in accounts of the same events.

But a further reason for cautious judgment on these accounts, is to be found in the consideration that the Evangelists neither were,

nor could be eye-witnesses of some of the occurrences; and, therefore, in recording the reports of the successive visits to the sepulchre, they were not so likely to adhere to the real order of events, as would have been natural in narrating what had passed under their own observation.

The perturbation of feeling with which the first report of the women must have been received; and the probability of repeated going backward and forward, to and from the sepulchre, which was just out of the city, are also entitled to be well weighed.

Some of these considerations would seem to justify a very free resort to hypothesis if necessary for the solution of any difficulties, or in other words, for the reconciliation of any seeming discrepancies in the incidents narrated. But far from making any large demand on the reader, his assent will be asked to a single supposition, in itself most reasonable, and corroborated by some noticeable peculiarities in the narratives themselves. No one, as Lampe observes, can expect us to *demonstrate* an hypothesis on such a subject. It is sufficient if it be not in itself very improbable.

We assume, in the first place, the contemporaneous progress of the events in different places.

The disciples appear to have been concealed in different quarters of Jerusalem, when *Mary Magdalene*, and *Mary* the mother of James, and *Salome*, set out very early in the morning, while it was yet dark, on the first day of the week, with spices or odoriferous unguents, which they had purchased in order to anoint the body of Jesus.^a Perhaps Mary Magdalene led the way, for all the Evangelists mention her first.^b

^a From Mark it would appear that the women purchased the spices and unguents on the expiration of the Sabbath. Luke relates that the women, before the Sabbath, returning home from the sepulchre, purchased unguents with spices, but remained at home during the Sabbath. But the passage of Mark may be explained in the following manner.—On the expiration of the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, with spices purchased for the anointing of the body of Jesus, went at the first dawn of the day commencing the week, to the sepulchre. Nicodemus had also prepared spices, and laid the body of Jesus in the sepulchre, intending afterwards to anoint it when the Sabbath was past.

^b This would account for a slight difference in the expression of St. John, who describes Mary Magdalene as coming early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre. Whereas, the

And as they went,^a they said among themselves, who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre ;^b and when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away. (Mark xvi. 3, 4.)

Following the evidence of Matthew or Mark, we might be led to infer that Mary Magdalene was present with the women when the angel afterwards declared that Jesus *was risen*. This, though a natural inference, is, however, nowhere directly affirmed by any of the evangelists. But, when we come to take the evidence of St. John, (the reader should turn to the 11—15 verses of his 20th chapter,) it must appear that Mary Magdalene, although men-

words of St. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who speak of the arrival of the other Mary, Salome, and other women, are, '*as it began to dawn towards the day*'—'*very early*'—or, '*at the rising of the sun.*'

^a They appear to have been followed, perhaps at a distance, by certain other women.—Luke xxiii. 55.—xxiv. 10.

^b Possibly they were not aware of the sealing of the stone or setting of the watch ; the disciples themselves, or most of them, may have been, at that time, ignorant of that fact. The seal was probably the seal of Pilate, and affixed to the two ends of a rope, brought over the stone.

tioned foremost in the 1st verses of Matthew (ch. xxviii.) and of Mark (ch. xvi.), as of the women that came to the sepulchre, *could not have been present* when, in the 6th verse of the very same chapters, the angel declared that Jesus *was risen*, and sent them to tell the disciples—"And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word."

Thus we are directed, by the very text of the Scripture itself, to the hypothesis, that *Mary Magdalene*, arriving foremost at the sepulchre, and seeing the stone rolled away, *ran back*, leaving the other women either at, or approaching the sepulchre. *She RUNNETH and cometh to Simon Peter, and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.*

THIS being granted, which the comparison of the evidence of Matthew and John, coupled with the following remarks, will render *almost certain*, every difficulty vanishes as we approach it, and the (at first view) discrepant

circumstances arrange themselves in their natural order; an example of that 'reconciled inconsistency,' which, (as Paley has observed,) 'in historical researches, becomes a positive argument: for when apparent inconsistencies are found, it is seldom that any thing but *truth* renders them capable of reconciliation; the existence of the difficulty proving the want of that caution which usually accompanies the consciousness of fraud; while the solution proves that it is not the collusion of fabulous propositions which we have to deal with, but that a thread of truth winds through the whole which preserves every circumstance in its place.'

—(*Horæ Paul.*)

The first tidings of the *stone being rolled away* were conveyed, as we have seen, together with her fears that they had taken away the Lord's body, by Mary Magdalene ALONE, to Peter and John. Hence it is that, when St. John in his Gospel relates these tidings, he very naturally introduces them by a short statement, that *Mary Magdalene* had gone very early to the sepulchre and seen the *stone* rolled away; he says nothing of any of the other

women whom he *then* did not see : he may have known that they accompanied Mary, but he omits that fact, not intending a narrative of *all* the circumstances, but simply of the manner in which Peter and he received the first intimation of what had occurred.

In the mean time, it is not to be supposed that Mary the mother of James, and Salome, and the other women, stood still, or were inactive. They remain, and approach nearer to the sepulchre. Here they behold two men in shining garments, (Luke xxiv. 4.) and they said,—that is, *one* of them who stood ‘on the right side’ (see Mark xvi. 5.) spake,—and therefore Matthew and Mark mention only that one,—‘Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen;—remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,’ (Luke xxiv.) And the angel said, ‘Come, see the place where the Lord lay,’ (Matt. xxviii. 6.) The women enter the sepulchre, and the angel said, ‘Go quickly and tell his disciples (‘and Peter,’ *Mark*,) that he is risen from the dead, and behold he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see

him,' (Matt. xxviii. 7.) 'And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word,' (ver. 8.) 'And as they went to tell the disciples, (probably as they drew near to the city,) Jesus met them, saying, "All hail," and they came and held him by the feet and worshipped him.' 'Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid, go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me,' (ver. 10.)

It would seem that the women were some time in finding the disciples, or perhaps went round about for fear of the Jews; for while 'they were going, behold some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all that was done,' &c. &c. (ver. 11.)

Mean while, and *before* the appearance of our Lord to the women when on their way to find the disciples, the following events took place; and, with respect to these events, St. John is plainly the very best authority. Mary Magdalene having, as we have seen, hastily communicated her tidings and her fears,—Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple,

and ran to the sepulchre, and the other disciple did outrun* Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he, stooping down, saw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed (Mary Magdalene's report (?). Then the (two) disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping: and, as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said she turned herself

* Peter appears to have been the oldest of the disciples, as the other disciple, John, is commonly thought to have been the youngest.

back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.^a Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary! She turned herself, and saith unto him, *Rabboni*; which is to say, Master, &c. (John xx. 3—16.)

This appearance of our Lord to Mary Magdalene must have been before Jesus met the other women on their way to find the disciples. The narrative supports this view. Mary had *run* direct to Peter and John, who both *ran*, followed by Mary, to the sepulchre, arriving, very probably, just after the other women had left. Peter and John having, very soon after, left the sepulchre to return home, there would be plenty of time for our Lord's appearance, *first* to Mary Magdalene, (Mark xvi. 9.) and afterwards to the women as they went to deliver the message of the angel to the disciples.

^a Either her eyes were holden, as the disciples, on their way to Emmaus, or her tears prevented her perceiving the figure of Jesus.

Peter and John had, by this time, returned home, not having seen the Lord or the angels, perhaps suspecting that the body had been stolen, when the women—to whom, as we have seen, *first* the angels, and *then* our Lord had appeared—finding Peter, and the rest of the eleven, told them all that had happened to them ;^a but their words seemed as idle tales, and *they believed them not*. Peter, as we have seen, had just before lost his labour ; but he now again runs to the sepulchre, and stooping down,^b beholds the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departs, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. (Luke xxiv. 12.)

Lastly, came Mary Magdalene and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and delivered the message that Jesus had spoken unto her, (John xx. 18.) Yet, when they had heard

^a Thus "it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women, that," *at different times*, "told all these things to the apostles." (Luke xxiv. 10.)

^b It is remarkable that, instead of *entering*, as at his *first* visit, he now *stoops down*, and *looks* with awed expectation to see the angels.

that he was alive, and had been seen of her, they believed not, (Mark xvi.) And behold two of them went the same day to a village called Emmaus, and he appeared unto them as they went. And as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight. And they rose up the same hour, and came to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon.* And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, *Jesus* himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, have ye any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an

* This appearance to Simon is no where related. Either this occurrence, or a comparison of the statements from all sides, had removed their doubts.

honey-comb. And he took it, and did eat before them. (Luke xxiv.)

Grotius observes, that the 44th and following verses of the last chapter of Luke, are a summary of the discourses of Jesus after his resurrection :—perhaps the break may be at ver. 50. It appears certain that they could not be intended to exclude other appearances of our blessed Lord, either in Jerusalem or in Galilee ; for St. Luke himself, referring in the Acts to this ‘ *former treatise*,’ tells us, that to his apostles Jesus shewed himself alive after his passion, by *many infallible proofs*, being seen of them *forty days*, and speaking of the things *pertaining to the kingdom of God*.

The disciples did not go into Galilee till *more* than eight days after the resurrection. This appears from John xx. 26.

Some critical elucidations of the original text, though of some importance to the complete clearing up of lesser difficulties, are here omitted.

There are also some slight verbal differences

in the words of the angels to the women, as related by the several evangelists ; but neither in them, nor in the incidents themselves, is there a single proved contradiction, or any thing to disentitle any word or incident to our belief.

THE DARKNESS OF THE PASSION.

Mr. GIBBON's aversion to Christianity is well known ; let us not say unhappily for the Christian world, but rather happily for our reasonable assurance of the solid foundations of our faith. We may presume, that the chief defects or vulnerable points of its historic evidence could hardly escape the acute and unfriendly scrutiny, and immense reading of that distinguished scholar. It is well known that he descended to the foundation stones of the church of Christ. Yet the only result of his survey of the origin and rise of Christianity, appears in the suggestion of certain *secondary* causes, which may be safely admitted to have in some degree contributed to its diffusion.

The lofty style of this distinguished writer,

however appropriate in the historian of the Decline of Imperial Rome, is very generally felt to involve a sacrifice of clearness and accuracy; at the same time, that it certainly has the effect of persuading us that the writer, in all cases, conceals a more intimate knowledge of his subject.

In this way Mr. Gibbon has draped and obscured his scepticism in a lofty superciliousness of tone. The occasions on which the veil of his irony is dropped, have not revealed a powerful or even an honourable opponent.

The artificial colouring and misrepresentation contained in the following passage will be reprobated by every candid mind.

“ Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth, or at least a celebrated province of the Roman Empire, was involved in a preternatural darkness of three hours. Even this miraculous event, which ought to have excited the wonder, the curiosity, and the devotion of mankind, passed without notice in an age of science and history. It happened during the life time of Seneca and the elder Pliny, who must have experienced the immediate effects, or received

the earliest intelligence of the prodigy. Each of these philosophers, in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena of Nature; earthquakes, meteors, comets, and eclipses, which his indefatigable curiosity could collect. Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe. A distinct chapter of Pliny is designed for eclipses of an extraordinary nature and unusual duration: but he contents himself with describing the singular defect of light which followed the murder of Cæsar, when, during the greatest part of a year, the orb of the sun appeared pale and without splendour. This season of obscurity, which cannot surely be compared with the preternatural darkness of the Passion, had been already celebrated by most of the poets and historians of that memorable age."

Now it is assuredly not necessary for the great purposes of religion, that we should be able to explain every difficulty in the Gospel narrative.

But it is necessary that we should be well as-

sured of the probity of a writer, who grounds on deductions from studies in which few can be expected to follow him, a popular argument against the religious hopes of his fellow-creatures.

St. Matthew thus notices the darkness Mr. Gibbon is treating of.

“ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani. And when he had cried again with a loud voice he yielded up the ghost. And the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose, &c. &c.”

The first thing that strikes us, is, that here is nothing even incidental to mark the intensity of the darkness. The contrary would appear if we be allowed to place between the sixth and ninth hours the affecting incident in which our Lord confided his mother to St. John.

An obscuration of the light of the sun, sometimes almost nocturnal, is noticed as generally preceding an earthquake. We here read

“The earth did quake, and the rocks rent.” And again, in the account of the resurrection given in the following chapter, we are told. “And behold there was a great earthquake, (*or concussion of the air with thunder*, Hammond,) and the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it.”

It is not stated, nor is it probable, that the effects of either shock were such as to be felt beyond the confines of Judea. The obscuration noticed above as generally preceding earthquakes, might be experienced for several miles round. It would be difficult to conceive the advantage of signs intended to arouse or convince the Jews being made sensible to other and distant nations.

Having said thus much on the degree of this darkness, it is to be observed, that the three evangelists who record it, all use the same word, rendered by our translators,—*over all the land*, in St. Matthew; *over the whole land*, in St. Mark; and *over the whole earth*, in St. Luke. The majority of the Fathers have been led by their piety to magnify the miracle, and extend it to the whole earth. Writers

of Mr. Gibbon's school, however, are not usually apt to accept the greater miracle. Perhaps the same motive that makes the country of the despised and unsocial Jew, in this instance, 'a celebrated province of the Roman Empire,' may have disposed Mr. Gibbon to magnify the miraculous darkness of the Passion into 'the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe.' We need not, however, be embarrassed by Mr. Gibbon's liberal faith: particularly as it is more analogous to the Divine conduct, to suppose the miracles limited for the present to the Holy Land. And if this be true, there remains no reason whatever for supposing that Seneca or Pliny experienced its effects. The alternative offered, in the words, 'or received the earliest intelligence of the prodigy,' by no means follows.

But granting for a moment all that Mr. Gibbon's imagination has suggested; the indefatigable curiosity, the vigilant correspondents stationed in Judea, and the punctual fidelity of their reports; was Mr. Gibbon quite certain that Seneca and Pliny ever intended to record *all* the phenomena they could collect? The

crowning evidence is, it seems, to be found in 'a distinct chapter of Pliny, designed for eclipses of an extraordinary nature or unusual duration,' and we are referred by Mr. Gibbon to the 30th chap. of Pliny's second book. The entire chapter is as follows :

"There appeared a circle of red colour, when L. Julius and P. Rutilius were consuls. Moreover, there are strange eclipses of the sun, continuing longer than ordinary,—as namely, when Cæsar Dictator was murdered. Moreover, in the wars of Antony, the sun continued almost a whole year of a pale wan colour."

After this, it cannot be necessary to justify Pliny's choice of an example familiar to the minds of his readers, and 'celebrated by poets and historians,' in preference to a *report*, supposing such a report to have reached him, of the darkness that accompanied the Passion.

CONCLUSION.

IN bringing these Observations to a close, the author desires it may be remembered that they have been limited to the *defensive*. Without doubt his task would have been more delight-

ful, had it led him to point out the many genuine indications of SINCERITY in those who have handed down to us the oracles of God,—from him who despised the treasures of Egypt, choosing rather to suffer affliction with God's people,—through the long succession of holy men who spake as they were moved by the Hóly Ghost,—down to the first Christian church, before persecutions had scattered the lambs of Christ; when, as yet, “all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need; and they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.”

The reader will not, however, have lost his time, if he should derive from what has been written no other conclusion, than that very little reliance can be placed upon objections proceeding on imperfect acquaintance with circumstances so different from any thing now subsisting. Some of the arguments herein advanced are so visibly founded in truth, that

to affect diffidence, in regard to them, would be but weakness. He who loves truth will give to them that place in his thoughts which, in his honest judgment, he shall perceive to be due to them. Of other parts of this volume the author must think more humbly. On some points, indeed, he has a gratifying conviction that he has offered natural solutions of the whole difficulty; while, on others, he is content to leave, as suggestions, until something better can be offered, the thoughts that have occurred to him, during the frequent reference to the Bible which his task rendered necessary.

Let then the inquirer abate, if he will, any *remaining* force in the objections, from the strength of that reasonable conviction which has been so often challenged for the Evidence of the Gospel. Let him class such partial objections with the "appearing uncertainty" noticed by Bishop Butler. He will surely admit, that much has already, at different times, been done for the clearing up of such difficulties; and he will, perhaps, feel it reasonable to leave to a future age, the removal of such as remain.

No effort has been made to interest his feelings. But, on the contrary, the appeal has been humble and calm, and directed to his serious judgment. The cause of Christianity will ever be that of beneficial restraint and happy dependance upon God ; and, although much eloquence may occasionally be enlisted in its service, it can scarcely be expected that such themes will find equal acceptance with declamations in the name of Liberty, and invitations to throw off what is represented as a yoke. Great, indeed, is the influence the opponents of the Gospel have, in every age, derived from the sympathy of the *natural* heart of Man. To take only one example. The evangelic lesson, "*If a man smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the left also,*" has been stigmatized as "assassinating the dignity of forbearance, and sinking man into a spaniel."* To this lofty

* Age of Reason.

It is singular that an *opposite* objection should have sometimes been grounded on Luke xxii. 36, though guarded from misconstruction by the 38th and 51st verses of the same chapter, and by the parallel passage, Matt. xxvi. 52, as well as by the whole spirit of the Gospel. The words contain nothing but a *prediction of instant perils* ; and may be taken as an example

verdict the calm investigator can only oppose the reflection, that it was needful in the circumstances, and suited to the genius, of our Lord's ministry, to *condense* its distinguishing spirit in a few *emphatic* lessons; so unsparing as to *search out all that exalted itself against them*, and so comprehensive as to *guard against all evasions of their obligation*.

Cheerfully do we admit, that a very different regard from the 'dignity of forbearance' towards our enemies, was inculcated by Him, who knew what was in man, and left us an example that we should follow his steps. But the true appeal is to the daily walk and experience of life; and there we see the *spirit* comprised in this, and similar divine lessons, hourly disarming and subduing the violent passions, and healing the breaches of domestic happiness.

This we believe to be that Wisdom that cometh down from heaven, and is pure, peace-

of the manner of our Lord's teaching; connected with impressive circumstances, and blended with figurative actions; such as experience proves best adapted to impress the memories of simple and uneducated men.

able, gentle, and easy to be entreated. There is, we know, a wisdom that is earthly, sensual, devilish. By their fruits we shall know them. Already we discern the vindication of the heavenly seed.—We believe that ‘every plant the Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up;’ and we see, in the progressive glory of the *principles* of the Gospel, and in the conviction they are bringing upon the INFLUENTIAL MIND of man, a kind of gradual *mining* of the kingdoms or influences of this World, and the sign of that hour when ‘they shall become the kingdoms of THE LORD and of HIS CHRIST.’

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